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Metamorphosis and Revelation (Part 5 of 5)

“A cat was enamored of a handsome youth and begged Aphrodite to change her into a woman. The goddess, pitying her sad state, transformed her into a beautiful girl, and when the young man saw her he fell in love with her and took her home to be his wife. While they were resting in their bedroom, Aphrodite, who was curious to know if the cat’s instincts had changed along with her shape, let a mouse loose in front of her. She at once forgot where she was, leapt up from the bed, and ran after the mouse to eat it. The indignant goddess then restored her to her original form.”

Aesop’s Fables[i]

History shows that an innocent man can be put on trial for his virtues. At the same time, a wicked man might be elected to high office. In 399 BC the city of Athens put the philosopher Socrates on trial. He was accused of refusing to recognize the state’s gods and introducing new deities. He was also accused of encouraging young men to question traditional values.

After hearing the prosecution’s case against him, Socrates reportedly said, “their persuasive words almost made me forget who I was … and yet they have hardly spoken a word of

truth." The accusers of Socrates were influential figures and pillars of the community. They were the political, literary, and rhetorical elite of society. His three main accusers were: Anytus, a high-ranking politician from a wealthy family of tanners; Meletus, a younger poet who signed the formal indictment against Socrates; and Lycon, a prominent democratic orator who had lost a son during the rule of the Thirty Tyrants. These three argued that Socrates was not merely a nuisance, but a dangerous subversive who undermined the laws and religion of society. As the political leader of the three, Anytus appeared to be especially irritated at the honesty of Socrates.

The founding father of social psychology, Gustave Le Bon, observed that the extreme falsity of an idea constitutes its strength in most men's minds. Under a so-called "democratic" form of society, where the masses have an entitlement mentality, this is especially true. Le Bon wrote, "The most glaring error becomes for the crowd a radiant truth, if it be sufficiently repeated."[ii] We see examples of this all around us today. The popularity of conspiracy theories, where "elites" are routinely demonized, owe everything to the democratic mob's feeling that life is unfair and an elite conspiracy is the root cause of this unfairness. Democracy, then, is conceived as a smashing of elite privilege. Ironically, each side in the left/right conflict views the other as tyrannical and corrupt. Perhaps both are right. In practice, nearly everyone sacrifices independence for belonging. After all, we are social creatures. A critical thinker, who works out problems for himself, is likely to become an outcast.

What was the background to the story of Socrates' trial? Five years earlier Athens lost the Peloponnesian War to Sparta. This war lasted 27 years, from 431 BC to 404 BC. The Peloponnesian War was largely fought between cities which had adopted one of two kinds of government. The Delian League, led by Athens, forced or encouraged allied city-states to adopt democracy. At the same time, the Peloponnesian League, led by Sparta, was said to be "oligarchic" for opposing Athenian democracy.[iii]

After Sparta defeated Athens and tore down the city's long wall, Sparta forced Athens to abolish democracy. Sparta then imposed the regime of Thirty Tyrants, believing democracy was an inherently unstable and fickle form of government subject to demagogues who empowered themselves by provoking wars. One of the key leaders of the Thirty Tyrants was Critias, a former student of Socrates. Sparta left a garrison in the Acropolis to keep the Thirty Tyrants in power; but this regime collapsed after eight months because of its rapaciousness. Under the Thirty Tyrants, Athens suffered a reign of terror in which approximately 1,500 prominent citizens were put to death and their assets seized. Thousands of others were exiled while only 3,000 wealthy men retained full civic rights, the teaching of rhetoric was banned and free speech curtailed. Here we have the background to the trial of Socrates, which is important for understanding the nature of the

injustice committed. This background is also important for explaining why democracy was considered a faulty political system by many political philosophers.

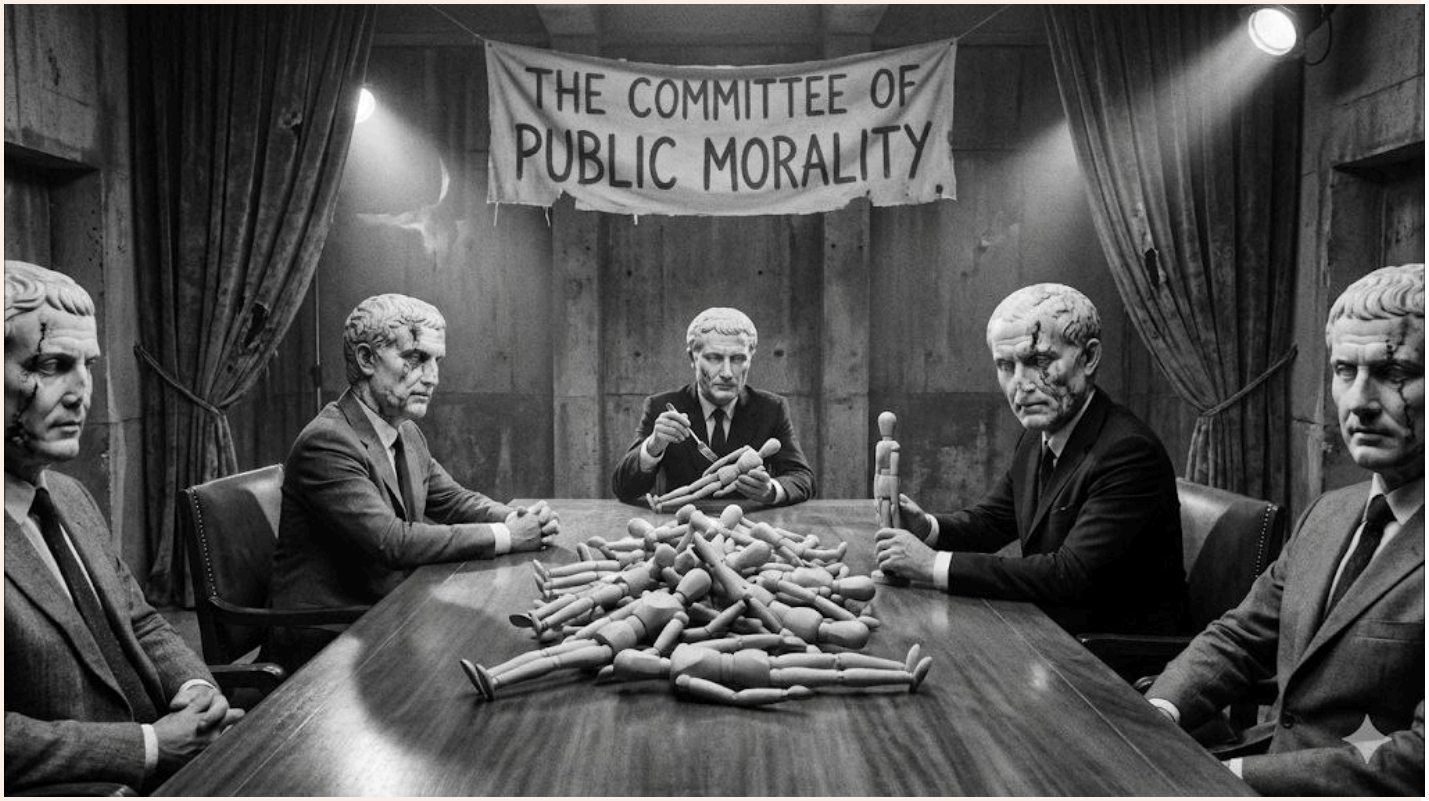
Plato was the most famous student of Socrates, and he disliked democracy (since it was democracy that had murdered Socrates). Aristotle wrote that democracy was the worst form of government (among the simple forms). Cicero echoed these judgments. It is also worth noting that Polybius, who praised the Roman constitution 100 years before Julius Caesar's dictatorship, said that democracies tended to degenerate into mob rule (ochlocracy), even as aristocracies degenerated into oligarchies and monarchies into tyranny. To prevent the simple forms of the state from degenerating, Polybius suggested that mixed constitutions (with checks and balances) were best, where all three forms of government were combined (i.e., monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy). Polybius also suggested that mixed constitutional republics, like Rome (and the future United States), would degenerate over time into a kind of mob rule and then devolve into tyranny (which is what happened to the Roman republic). The trial and execution of Socrates was a cautionary tale attached to the concept of democratic degeneration.

Today everyone uses the word "democracy" with great approval, though few understand what this term means. The main thing in democracy is that everyone has an equal share in governing. This kind of government has never existed in the United States. Everyone does not, by any stretch, have an equal share in governing the country. Yet, there is a democratic party and democratic activism in America that gives tremendous lip service to "democracy." In recent decades these "democrats" have been setting up a socialist autocratic system. This kind of hypocrisy is normal in politics, especially when people do not know what the word "democracy" means or what history says about it. Democratic propaganda is so successful and widespread most of us have capitulated to using the term "democracy" to characterize what is (in truth) a system of checks and balances intended to preserve freedom. For those who advance "democratic" propaganda, of course, ancient history is a scandal – not only because of the trial and death of Socrates. There was also "the Melian Dialogue" of Thucydides, in which an island colony of Sparta appealed to justice and the gods, arguing that it could not in good conscience join Athens in the war against its mother country (Sparta). Athens rejected this appeal to morality stating that "the strong do what they can, and the weak suffer what they must." Athens laid siege to Melos, captured the city and executed all adult men on the island, enslaving all the women and children. The island was then repopulated with Athenian colonists. Most Americans know nothing of the Melian Dialogue, or that democracy got a bad name in ancient history. They think democracy signifies morality. Of course, as recently as the 1930s, tests for U.S. citizenship asked prospective new citizens to correctly describe America's form of government. If they answered "democracy," they would have gotten a wrong answer. The correct answer was "republic."

It should not be surprising that democratic socialists, especially in mainstream journalistic circles, have sometimes taken up a cudgel against Socrates as a villain. In 1988, I.F. Stone wrote a book titled, *The Trial of Socrates*, which became a national bestseller. In this book Stone argued, in essence, that Socrates was a traitor to Athenian democracy – a dangerous subversive who got what he deserved. The book's reception sparked fierce debates across elite literary journals and classical history departments. Prestigious left-of-center publications and literary critics celebrated the book as an innovative, fast-paced historical detective story – an intellectual thriller, according to *The New York Times*. Mainstream critics generally admired how Stone, as a legendary muckraking journalist, taught himself ancient Greek in his seventies to investigate primary texts. Many praised Stone's "no-nonsense methods" of stripping away centuries of philosophical reverence to look at the raw politics of 399 BC. At the same time, traditional classicists were stunned by Stone's "vulgarly reductionist" approach that forced the complexities of ancient history into a modern propagandist's mold. Some noted the irony that Stone, as a supposed lifelong champion of the First Amendment and free speech, wrote a book rationalizing the execution of an annoying philosopher.[iv]

In the trial of Socrates, we see that philosophy is not about reading books, analyzing, or logic-chopping. It is a life-and-death matter. Philosophy (as love of wisdom) only exists when a human being is actively practicing it in the real world. Philosophy involves admitting our ignorance and accepting the truth, wherever it leads. This requires, above all, openness toward transcendent truth. It demands adherence to the eternal order of the soul in the face of societal pressure. In executing Socrates, the Athenian court did not just execute a man; rather, a corrupt ochlocracy made war on truth. In this dramatic event, Socrates personified the ordered soul while the Athenian mob represented a disordered society.

In his writings, the political philosopher Eric Voegelin agreed that philosophy is something that occurs only if we imitate the example of Socrates. When Socrates said, "the unexamined life is not worth living," he was calling on everyone to know and accept the truth about themselves – the truth about the human condition. From this we discover that a regime based on a "second reality" (i.e., a false notion of reality), is dangerous and corrupt. Seeking truth is the only way to combat corruption in ourselves and the state. This lesson from ancient history ought to touch us deeply today; for our politics is degenerating into demagogic formations that have no interest in the truth.



Respect for truth has a unifying effect on society. Where the truth has been lost, demagogic manipulators descend into factional infighting. Jacques Mallet du Pan wrote, "Like Saturn, the Revolution devours its children." It was this phrase that best characterized the murderous terrorism of the French Revolution, and that of the Bolsheviks in Russia. As the situation deteriorates, ruthless factions emerge in succession until the establishment of an absolute dictator. The revolutions that swept Great Britain and America during the century before the French Revolution were conservative and advanced the freedom of society. But history took a turn with the French Revolution. Each successive movement for liberation became more radical, more violent, more demanding, and more socialistic.

Gustave Le Bon noted, in *The Psychology of Socialism*, that ancient societies experimented with all forms of socialism. He wrote that "Greece, notably put them all into practice and ended by dying of her dangerous experiments." He then quoted M. Guirand's remark that, "All the contemporary doctrines are represented herein, from Christian socialism to the most advanced collectivism." Le Bon himself explained,
"All the political revolutions in Greece were at the same time social revolutions, or revolutions with the aim of changing the inequalities of conditions by despoiling the rich and oppressing the aristocracy. They often succeeded, but their triumph was always ephemeral."[v]

It should not surprise us that ancient Greece produced demagogues who – hailing largely from the middle class – upheld the working class. Returning to 399 BC, it follows that Anytus would call for the execution of Socrates because, in plain terms, Socrates' personal

and transcendent standard of right and wrong made the city's democratic myths look hollow. With shocking vulgarity, I.F. Stone defended the Athenian jury that condemned Socrates as working-class men honorably defending their system. This is a far cry from Eric Voegelin's view that late Athenian democracy was deeply corrupt and "spiritually closed." Future historians might well conclude that modern America, like ancient Athens, declined under a sophistic rhetoric that falsified reality as it catered to the base passions of the mob. With his background in Greek sources, Voegelin argued that Athens underscored its own spiritual decay by preferring a "corrupted certainty" over open, honest philosophic inquiry.[vi]

Socrates was a dissident who questioned the honesty of leading figures. "These investigations [of mine]," explained Socrates at his trial, "has led to my having many enemies of the most dangerous kind, and has given occasion also to many calumnies…." While Socrates was a righteous man, his enemies had no scruples and were free to give false testimony. Faced with powerful men leveling false charges, Socrates refused to beg for his life and spoke only what he knew to be true. The truth is like a slap in the face to those who are dishonest. Because the untruthful person has lost the real ground of his own dignity, a truthful person puts him to shame. The truth then sounds like arrogance. *How does anyone dare say such things to my face?*

According to Plato, Socrates said to his judges, "There are many reasons why I am not grieved, O men of Athens, at the vote of condemnation." He added that his primary concern was not to avoid death, but to avoid unrighteousness. The last favor he then asked his countrymen was to punish his sons: "I would have you trouble them, as I have troubled you, if they seem to care about riches, or anything, more than about virtue; or if they pretend to be something when they are really nothing…." This, he said, was true justice.[vii]

Xenophon tells us that Socrates affirmed his innocence and did not understand how they could have condemned him to death. "I have no doubt that the future … will attest that I never wronged or harmed anyone, but benefitted those I conversed with by freely teaching them any good thing I could." Xenophon said that Socrates was cheerful as he was led away. On seeing one of his friends crying, the philosopher said, "What's this? You're crying now? You should have realized long ago that ever since I was born I have been condemned to death by my nature."[viii]

Socrates said that the unexamined life "is unlivable for a human being." The greatest good is to discuss virtue every day, he said, testing oneself and others. The maxim of the Delphic Oracle, "Know thyself," comes into play here; for Socrates' sense of religion was to honor the god of the Oracle by warning against a lack of self-awareness. Know what you are.

Know your limitations. When we consider that psychopaths and malignant narcissists (i.e., the villains of today's psychologizing) are described as having low self-awareness, we begin to see the importance of seeking truth. Psychopaths and narcissists are known for their dishonesty. They are *the people of the lie*. And it is the lies they tell to themselves that make them so damaged and so damaging to others. All disordered individuals fail to question themselves. Instead, they rely on fabrications that others are cajoled or bullied into paying homage to.

Eric Voegelin's last book, *In Search of Order*, described man's participatory consciousness as a search for truth and order. This is not merely a search for exterior facts, but primarily a search for inner truths. To find the truth we need courage and imagination because the truth is frightening and entails accountability. In many areas of life, prevarication and untruth serve as tempting alternatives. Voegelin explained,
"The imaginative perversion of participatory imagination into an autonomously creative power has remained a constant in human history however well its manifestations have been ... diagnosed, criticized, dramatized, disapproved, anathematized, ironized, ridiculed, and satirized."[ix]

Life must be lived imaginatively, but it must be a true imagining as opposed to a false imagining. Voegelin argued that our existence also requires *imaginative remembrance*. Opposed to this, there is the possibility of falsifying the past by cultivating *imaginative obliviousness*. This is a dangerous and subtle form of resistance to truth which appears today in the form of a *toxic remembering* (e.g., history as conspiracy theory). Plato warned us about this, wrote Voegelin, but his warning "has not survived in philosophical discourse; even worse, because of its compactness, it has become practically untranslatable into modern language."[x] This is because modernity does not understand the importance of imagination, being fixated on so-called "facts." And yet, the meaning of facts is provided by context, and context is derived *imaginatively*.

"Imaginative oblivion deforms consciousness," insisted Voegelin. It is not surprising, then, to find that the dialogues of Socrates are not strict transcripts of what Socrates said, word for word. They are imaginative reconstructions; neither are the speeches of Roman or Athenian politicians word-for-word transcripts of what was said. Except, perhaps, for the surviving speeches of Cicero (whose slave was the inventor of shorthand) most other ancient speeches are imaginative reconstructions. The modern journalistic mind must find this shocking. Yet our journalistic reports often misrepresent speeches and events while offering direct and accurate quotations. With our journalists, accurate quotes are often framed in a way that essentially falsifies the whole. In many cases, no context is provided at all. Only right imagination sees the proper context and instills clarity into what is presented. Of course, we do not like the idea that Thucydides, a self-described objective

historian, presented his version of Pericles' famous funeral oration; but Thucydides' version is superior to a modern journalistic account in that it presents what is most meaningful rather than what is most factual. After all, there were no tape recorders then, or video cameras, or journalists with notepads. Everyone lived by memory, and it is in the interplay between imagination and remembering that we find truth. One might ask, in this context, whether Xenophon's depiction of Socrates is the real Socrates, or should we rely on Plato's depiction?

When Edmund Burke pointed to the "moral imagination," which is something he possessed in abundance, he was pointing to a deep spiritual and motive power within man. When we consider how trivial, how senseless, how besides the point nearly everything in the news is today, are we surprised? Has our obsession with "accuracy" delivered a clearer picture of the world, or has it delivered us up to minutia and confusion? Is the news a haystack in which we have lost the needle of truth?

We dumped the moral imagination long ago, insisting that the physical world of facts is all there is. We turned divinely inspired reason into "nonrevelatory reason," which quickly evolved into an "antirevelatory" revolt against divinity, saying to ourselves that "God is dead."[xi] We lost the ability to imagine the Truth, but we did not lose the ability to imagine and propagate all manner of lies. It may be argued that the perversion of the imagination's power accelerated during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This acceleration was painstakingly laid out in Paul Hazard's *The Crisis of the European Mind: 1680-1715*. Hazard, who died in Nazi-occupied France in 1944, offered a simple question and answer at the end of his book:
"What, then, is Europe? A cockpit, a seething cauldron of neighbors fighting one against another…. War everywhere, say the history books, hard put to follow all the ramifications of the universal melee. Rulers may sign treaties, but the treaties do not last. Peace is what everyone is longing for and no one ever gets. The nations are sick to death of the interminable strife, but still the wars go on. Year by year, as Spring returns, the armies take the field again."[xii]

Here is a vision of rising disorder. Hazard laments that there is no way to establish peace on Earth, no Gnostic escape-hatch, no political solution, and no evolutionary path to some perfect society. This is the situation we are in. There is no running away from it. We must not lie to ourselves. Hazard then asks a question:
"And now, yet once again, what is this Europe? A spirit that is forever seeking. Unsparing of herself, she is ceaselessly pursuing two goals: one of them is Happiness; the other … is Truth. No sooner does she make some discovery that seems to her to satisfy her twofold need, then she suspects, nay, she knows, that what she grasps, all too precariously, is, after

all, but a temporary, an imperfect thing. And so she sets forth once more on her unending quest, at once her pride and her enduring pain."[xiii]

This observation is Socratic to its core. And now the crisis of our civilization worsens. We are confronted by two choices: *imaginative oblivion* or *imaginative remembrance*.

Psychologizing Spiritual Sickness

The strategic situation of the United States, like the cultural situation, is grounded in that same malaise that Richard Weaver dissected in *Ideas Have Consequences*, written shortly after World War II and published in 1948. In his introduction, Weaver wrote, "This is another book about the dissolution of the West." He added, "It is here the assumption that the world is intelligible and that man is free and that those consequences we are now expiating are the product … of unintelligent choice."[xiv]

Strange as it might seem, Weaver's assumption echoes a thematic concept found in Freud's 1916-17 lectures[xv] where Freud insisted that neurosis is not an innocent condition; that some measure of blame attaches to the neurotic because he indulged an *unintelligent choice*. Here was, indeed, a foundational pillar of Freud's theory; namely, that the ego makes choices; that neurosis results from a compromise orchestrated by the ego to solve an internal conflict; that the individual actively, though somewhat unconsciously, chooses a symptom over the psychic pain of confronting a repressed *truth*.

Now isn't that interesting?

A neurotic is "not innocent" because he or she is driven to inflict suffering as a form of punishment on herself (and on others) rather than face up to the truth. Neurotic patients, Freud noted, often develop a fierce resistance to getting well because their neurosis allows them to avoid responsibilities, manipulate their environment (i.e., other people), or extract sympathy. According to Freud, neurosis is not a passive disease that merely "happens" to a person like a cold. It is a motivated, functional, and deeply calculated strategy of a mind that is only partially conscious regarding its own motivations. This ties directly back to Socrates' notion of the unexamined life as unlivable. Neurosis is about "facing away" from oneself. By treating neurosis as a passive, "innocent" medical condition rather than an active psychological choice, the patient avoids the difficult, courageous work of self-confrontation. Furthermore, this view of neurosis lines up with the creation of a "false self" which bars the way to self-examination. Here is a personal hell, if you ever want to live in one.

Since Freud put forward these ideas there has been a massive, systematic shift in mainstream psychology to bury the Freudian concept of "non-innocent" neurosis and replace it with a model of absolute "innocence." The most deliberate attempt to bury the guilt of the neurotic occurred in 1980 with the publication of the DSM-III (Diagnostic of Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders). This opened the way to a purge, under the leadership of psychiatrist Robert Spitzer. What was purged? The word "neurosis" was expelled from the diagnostic manual. At that time psychiatry entered a materialist phase where analyzing the hidden motivations and unconscious choices of patients was deemed illusory. Biology was supposed to explain everything, while the soul was dismissed as mythological. A new medical model came into vogue. Every mental case was about chemical imbalances in the brain. Mental illness was reframed as a biological disease. This reframing led directly to psychopharmacology; that is, the poisoning of the patient with drugs that, ironically, assisted the neurotic in his or her evasion of reality (i.e., through a process of chemical oblivion). Do people on psyche-meds have a moral imagination? Or has their imagination been narcoticized? Does anyone believe that a person on psyche-meds is "authentic"? Do they improve or simply lose the ability to feel their symptoms?

Here we find the same philosophic errors that gave us totalitarianism. The individual is negated and is said to have no agency. In this view of things, depression and anxiety merely *happen to you*, much like catching the flu or developing diabetes. This goes entirely against Freud, who viewed neurotic symptoms as meaningful messages from the unconscious – warning that the patient has made a dark compromise to avoid a deeper truth. By treating mental illness as a mechanical glitch in the brain, or a random genetically caused "chemical imbalance," all moral responsibility for oneself is removed.

Here we find that biological determinism is set down as "scientifically demonstrated" by scientist-zombies who ironically deny their own agency. They are so oblivious – so lost in *imaginative oblivion* – that they do not realize how pernicious their materialist determinism is. The assumptions made by these scientist-zombies, especially about mental health and moral responsibility, are neurotic in themselves; for here is an evasion of truth and responsibility so palpable and brazenly self-exculpatory, as to represent the disease posing as a doctor. Add to this the rising dishonesty of the market economy as "managed" by other scientistic zombies, and you get the commercialization of mental health where insurance companies only pay for the officially accepted pharmaceutical "solution."

In line with our political pathologies, psychology itself has become pathological. This is one aspect of a larger historical shift towards an *imaginative oblivion* that negates the individual while promising utopia. By pathologizing and medicalizing normal human struggles, the state and the medical establishment have turned today's spiritual and

philosophical crisis of meaning into a massive, profitable industry. When psychology made neurosis "innocent," it stripped the individual of his Socratic duty to examine his own life. It allowed humans to look at their inner chaos and say, "This is not my fault, and there is nothing for me to face. Can I take a pill?"

Here is a very frightening version of what Eric Voegelin warned might happen; that is, the administrative takeover of the soul. When modern psychological and institutional narratives strip the individual of moral agency – declaring a person's self-deceptive mode of life to be an "innocent" mechanical glitch – oblivion is officially and clinically affirmed and promoted. What is an oblivious person, after all? The words "oblivious" and "oblivion" are directly related both etymologically and conceptually, as they both stem from the Latin root *oblivisci*, meaning "to forget." The oblivious person is in a state of forgetfulness. This forgetfulness extends outward in several dimensions, wreaking havoc on society and the individual. In terms of civilization as a whole, think of how we are caught up in presentism, how we have cultivated a generation without historical knowledge, without caring to know American history, or Western history, or the great deeds of the past? *This is oblivion*. *And the person who lives without historical knowledge is oblivious*.

As in the case of Socrates, anyone who attempts to look deeper, to imaginatively confront the crisis, is viewed as a threat. As all dysfunctional institutions require for their continuance a great mass of neurotics, the unexamined life becomes the unstated objective of the system itself. All received wisdom becomes, as it were, an evasion (i.e., a lie); for that great mass of neurotics must be channeled and harvested for "the revolution," ready to follow a series of misguided "leaders." As the political circus mesmerizes the crowd, it robs people of the courage to face their own inner darkness. The death-spiral of society accelerates as men become estranged from women, as the birth-rate tumbles, as everything falls apart and the center cannot hold. Add UFO/UAP disclosures to the mix. Add major wars to the mix. Add the collapse of the stock market. Add the grand solar minimum (i.e., global cooling). Add Trump in the White House and Christ on the cross. What do you have?

Imaginative obliviousness means that the soul has deliberately closed itself off from the Logos (i.e., the ultimate truth). Obliviousness, then, is not a condition but an act that is repetitively performed. Your mind must remain closed, and your eyes shut, and your ears plugged – and you must keep it that way! More than anything, this is the closure of the soul – where we cut ourselves off from the truth. It is not an innocent forgetfulness we have cultivated; rather, it is an aggressive refusal to notice what is right in front of us. It is an active tuning-out of reality to protect a preferred narrative; that is, a narrative of *imaginative oblivion*.

The anti-Socratic state is a machine that encourages forgetting even as the mission of Socrates was remembrance through rigorous self-examination. Socrates suggested that all learning is remembering. The ideologues and party leaders of today want a population that is completely oblivious and ready to forget everything that was said only yesterday. Think of the broken promises, the shifting narratives, the new lies for old. Furthermore, oblivion belongs to the alchemy of cowardice, of running away from oneself. The oblivious soul is a soul "with holes" that is focused on something false. Because of this, the holes will never be filled. This is the hallmark of pathological narcissism and its grandiosity. And like all of history's most famous unexamined lives, those who flew with Trump to Beijing, or parrot Russian propaganda about Ukraine, are paying homage to oblivion – and to murder.[xvi]

Materialism as the Inversion of Ontology

We are in a sad state. America's moral compass is broken. How did it happen? We have adopted the unexamined life. The dominant paradigm of our ruling elite denies the existence of the soul. During the last 300 years, scientism has emerged in support of a materialistic ontology. Our culture has accepted as scientific the notion that matter is the primary thing, and the only real thing. Mind and intellect are, for us, epiphenomenal; that is to say, mind and intellect are the powerless byproducts of the physical brain. We no longer believe that the inner world, the world of the mind and spirit, are objectively real.

In the philosophy of Plato, in the dialogues of Socrates, in the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle, we come across the idea that mind is primary and matter is secondary. Such was the "realism" and the "idealism" of the ancients. But we have inverted the ontology of the unmoved mover by believing that mindless matter created itself and then created consciousness, rather than consciousness or spirit creating (i.e., giving form to) matter. By inverting the nature of being (i.e., ontology) we have taken to denying the reality of mind, spirit, and God. What then is left of meaning when consciousness is written off as a bio-chemical reaction in the brain? Here we come face-to-face with a kind of demoralization; for here we see that nothing spiritual is to be accepted as real.

In that case, what happens to God?

The answer is obvious. God is dead. And this "death" was made famous by Friedrich Nietzsche in the "Parable of the Madman," where a figure resembling Diogenes the Cynic accuses himself and his contemporaries of *murdering* God. Nietzsche's parable reads as follows:
"Have you heard of that madman who lit a lantern in the bright morning hours, ran to the market place, and cried incessantly: 'I seek God! I seek God!' – As many of those who did

not believe in God were standing around just then, he provoked much laughter. Has he got lost? asked one. Did he lose his way like a child? asked another. Or is he hiding? Is he afraid of us? Has he gone on a voyage? emigrated? – Thus they yelled and laughed.

"The madman jumped into their midst and pierced them with his eyes. 'Whither is God?' he cried; 'I will tell you. ***We have killed him*** *– you and I. All of us are his murderers. But how did we do this? How could we drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What were we doing when we unchained this earth from its sun? Whither is it moving now? Whither are we moving? Away from all suns? Are we not plunging continually? Backward, sideward, forward, in all directions? Is there still any up or down? Are we not straying as through an infinite nothing? Do we not feel the breath of empty space? Has it not become colder? Is not night continually closing in on us? Do we not need to light lanterns in the morning? Do we hear nothing as yet of the noise of the gravediggers who are burying God? Do we smell nothing as yet of the divine decomposition? Gods, too, decompose. God is dead, God remains dead. And we have killed him.*

"'How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe the blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games will we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it? There has never been a greater deed; and whoever is born after us – for the sake of this deed he will belong to a higher history than all history hitherto.'"[xvii]

As any reader can see, Nietzsche's "Parable of the Madman" is more sorrowful, poignant and profound, than the simple phrase "God is dead." Elsewhere, in the Preface of *The Will to Power*, Nietzsche unveils the murder weapon along with an uncanny prophecy about the future. He says that Christianity has died "at the hands of its own morality (which cannot be replaced), which turns against the Christian God." By this he means that religion is like a sausage. Once a man discovers how it is made, he loses his taste for it. This is what Nietzsche called "the advent of nihilism"; for all our values were bound up in Christianity, and the loss of Christianity signals the withering of man's spirit, the unstringing of his bow. What follows? The horrors of the Revelation of John. Wars the likes of which the world has never seen. Wars where ideas are pitted against one another. Then, at some point in the future, a "countermovement" will take the place of nihilism. Nietzsche further explained, *"Skepticism regarding morality is what is decisive. The end of the moral interpretation of the world, which no longer has any sanction after it has tried to escape into some beyond…. 'Everything lacks meaning' (the untenability of one interpretation of the world,*

upon which a tremendous amount of energy has been lavished, awakens the suspicion that all interpretations of the world are false).”[xviii]

Here Nietzsche admits his materialism, his disbelief in the soul, his disbelief in truth. Writing a few decades before Nietzsche, Søren Kierkegaard witnessed the rise of a sterile, hyper-rationalized European culture. He saw that the European mind had become obsessed with scientific objectivity, which was actively draining the world of genuine meaning. However, where Nietzsche saw the death of God as an unalterable historical fact to be transcended, Kierkegaard saw it as a spiritual crisis that could only be cured by a radical reclamation of faith.

Nietzsche argued that materialism and scientism offered the only possible alternative to religion; that is, an essentially Godless cosmology where man *becomes* God (i.e., the superman). Nietzsche admitted this was problematic. He even painted a chilly picture of the world as a Godless orb, unmoored and plunging into an abyss. What was Nietzsche’s solution? The advent of superman. And what is superman? A creature of Nietzsche’s *imaginative oblivion*; that is, *nothing at all*.

Kierkegaard, in his *The Sickness Unto Death*, offered a very different set of answers. In fact, if anyone had suggested redemption by way of a superman, the Danish philosopher would have laughed. This, for him, would have been another case of a nihilist trying to get around his own “unconscious despair.” All those focused exclusively on daily business and trivial distractions are living an unexamined life. And this kind of life leads directly to despair.

Eric Voegelin, in his analysis of Nietzsche’s madman parable, agreed with Kierkegaard that those who live the unexamined life are “cultivating despair,” which Voegelin referred to as “alienation.” Even when these people pretend to be religious, or think they are religious, they are despairing and alienated because, in essence, they are oblivious (i.e., neurotic by choice, to borrow Freud’s terminology). I am reminded of an Orthodox priest in California who said, more than thirty years ago, that his parish could not make Christians out of immigrants from the former Soviet Union. “These people cannot absorb Christianity,” he explained. Today the same can be said for a steadily growing mass of Americans. When Nietzsche’s madman furtively suggested that men might become gods if only to be worthy of their crime, he was saying that man could invent his own meaning.[xix] Voegelin suggested this kind of obliviousness was a ticking metaphysical time bomb. Long before Nietzsche, Kierkegaard warned against “defiant despair.” In this state, the individual recognizes that they are disconnected from God, but instead of seeking reconciliation, they defiantly try to construct their own selfhood out of nothing. Here is how one constructs a “false self,” as it were. Kierkegaard noted that the defiant person wants to “master build”

their own identity. This is what Hitler attempted to do for Germany, and this is what malignant narcissists do – at the expense of everyone around them.

Of course, Nietzsche understood that secular humanists were naïve if they imagined (obliviously) they could discard God and retain Christian values like human rights, equality, order, and progress. Voegelin explained that people who cut themselves off from the transcendent source of reality were inviting total disorientation and inevitable destruction. There could be no supermen emerging from such a disorientation – only *crazy Nazis*. It would not be fair, in this context, to saddle Nietzsche with Hitler's crimes, but obliviousness is a dangerous thing to cultivate. Hitler was, after all, an *oblivious man*. He used Nietzsche's philosophy as a prop; never really understanding Nietzsche because Hitler was an actor and a plagiarist.[xx] He was not interested in understanding philosophers. Hitler was interested in mimicking them if only to convince his contemporaries that he was a genius (i.e., essential to his false self).

Hitler pretended to create "new values," as Nietzsche had suggested. And what were these values? Obedience to a leader who knew the way to a glorious Reich of a thousand years, which only lasted twelve; the glorification of right over might, leading to the defeat of Germany (as this same idea led to the defeat of Athens). Eric Voegelin later argued that when human beings try to "become gods" (or supermen) they invariably create Hell on Earth. Humanity cannot bear the weight of being its own ultimate foundation. Why? Because everyone dies. Every empire falls. As guitarist Kerry Livgren wrote,

I close my eyes
Only for a moment and the moment's gone
All my dreams
Pass before my eyes with curiosity

Dust in the wind
All they are is dust in the wind.

Same old song
Just a drop of water in an endless sea
All we do
Crumbles to the ground though we refuse to see[xxi]

Everything in the material world passes away. Nothing lasts. What does it mean, then, to "create values" out of what is passing away? All such values, being material, are ephemeral; that is to say, they are not transcendent.

Throughout his career, Eric Voegelin launched a fierce critique against materialism, scientism, and physicalist ontology. He did not view these as innocent academic theories, but as primary drivers of the modern deformation of language leading directly to totalitarianism. For Voegelin, flattening reality into nothing more than "matter in motion" (or physical objects) was the ultimate act of obliviousness (*anoia*).

There is a reason our obliviousness moves us closer to totalitarianism. *Imaginative oblivion* cultivates a narrow and dogmatizing propaganda that distorts consciousness. Under the regime of distorted consciousness everything is brought low – morality, intellectual integrity, and spiritual strength. When *imaginative oblivion* meets religion you get false religion, millenarian fanaticism, theocracy, etc.; when *imaginative oblivion* turns to materialism, the resulting nihilism strips transcendent symbols of their depth, treating words merely as signs for physical objects (i.e., nominalism, which Richard Weaver identified as a key factor in the decline of the West – explained at length in his book, *Ideas Have Consequences*).

Totalitarianism is bound up with *imaginative oblivion*. Take the example of Hitler, who was a materialist philistine. He faked his moral stand against corruption, being thoroughly corrupt himself. He faked his role as a child of Providence. In fact, Hitler did not believe that the universe had moral order in it. He believed only in the right of the strongest, the law of the jungle. If Hitler's atheism was intermingled with pantheism, his Darwinism counted for more.[xxii] He believed that "nature" intended that the weak should perish. Nature, said Hitler, is devoid of compassion, indifferent to atrocity. In a 1942 monologue he said,
"Nature is cruel; therefore we are also entitled to be cruel. When I send the flower of German youth into the steel hail of the next war without feeling the slightest regret over the previous German blood that is being spilled, should I not also have the right to eliminate millions of an inferior race that multiplies like vermin?"[xxiii]

This dark soul, with its elephantine memory and passionate desire for conquest, started a war that killed tens of million human beings. His *imaginative remembering* was undeniably warped and murderous (oblivious to the true light of the world). Yet millions followed him, adored, and admired him. In fact, Hitler is *still* admired. As an example, Christian Nationalist Nick Fuentes says "Hitler was f'ing cool."

Of course, Nick Fuentes is a moral idiot. But if you listen closely to his subtext, you might hear a new gospel; especially, that Hitler died for your sins. Imagine if the white race had a savior, and this savior was rejected, driven into his bunker. Yes! He bit down on a cyanide capsule and blew his brains out. So, where is Hitler's body? Alas, the tomb is empty. The body is nowhere to be found. Perhaps he ascended into Heaven on a UFO. He escaped

Berlin and lives in an Aryan paradise under the Antarctic ice sheet. Why not? If God is dead, why can't Hitler be God?

And Gods are beyond good and evil. Right?

St. Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas suggested that evil is not a "thing" in itself, but a hole in goodness, much like darkness is merely the absence of light. In other words, evil is parasitic in nature, unable to exist on its own. It is vampiric, arising from a perverted will. This happens, said Augustine, when free will (which is good) turns away from higher things toward that which is lower.

We have many questions when it comes to evil. Is a man who commits evil actions *evil in himself*, or can we say that his actions are evil while he is innocent because he "knows not what he does"? Aristotle suggested that a person is what they *repeatedly* do. One evil act does not make a person evil, just as one virtuous act does not make someone a saint. Therefore, a person becomes "evil" through evil habit, which hardens and fixes the character.

In many ethical systems, evil depends on intention. If a person harms another person by accident, it is a tragedy. To be considered evil, there must be a deliberate will to cause harm. Hannah Arendt, in her account of the Adolf Eichmann trial, argued that many "evil" people are not monstrous villains but ordinary individuals who simply refuse to think or take responsibility. In other words, they are "oblivious men." In this view, the person is not "intrinsically evil"; rather, they become a vessel for evil by failing to exercise their moral conscience. And yet, there is a choice associated with this. It is the choice one makes when living an unexamined life. It is the choice of Freud's neurotic.

Coming from such great minds as St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinus, Aristotle, and Hannah Arendt, we are ready to agree with everything they say. Yet Carl Jung did not think evil was merely the absence of good. He thought this explanation of evil downplayed the suffering that evil inflicted on the innocent. He believed evil was as real and potent as the good, famously stating that one cannot logically describe a quality, like goodness, without its opposite also having *substance*. Jung believed in something he called "the Shadow." It is a part of the psyche where "dark traits" are repressed and end up possessing those who live an unexamined life. Jung warned that these "dark traits" are not mere absences of virtue. They are much more dangerous because the Shadow has a will of its own and can become a "raging monster" when suppressed, leading to mass atrocities like those committed by Hitler.

The Devil is In the Details

Departing from abstract analysis, let us apply what we have learned about those who live an unexamined life. Let us review the horrors that have unfolded since the beginning of this year. Back in January and February, Donald Trump was threatened by revelations related to the Jeffrey Epstein files. So he began a war against Iran which took the Epstein scandal out of the headlines. And then, predictably, Trump declared victory in the war; but the Iranians closed the Strait of Hormuz and this victory turned into defeat. The global economy began to crack. Trump dug a pit and fell into it. What can he do under the circumstances? *He pretends everything is fine*. After blaming Europe, his logical next move is to break something else. Invade Cuba. Release some UFO/UAP files. Go to China and offer up our markets on a plate. Play the kleptocrat. *"Put money in thy purse. Go forth and make money."*

Trump wants a distracted public. The UFO/UAP files are ready at hand. The minions of *Imaginative oblivion* will use these files to invent new conspiracy theories, new ideologies and theologies. The "ontological shock" associated with "disclosure" will destabilize the system. We must not forget that America has many Gnostics itching for civil war. And then, one must ask the question: What is an Unidentified Anomalous Phenomenon? *The key word here is Anomalous*. This returns us to occult imagery, to the subject of ritual human sacrifice and sex magic. After passing through several iterations of distraction, we find ourselves dragged back into the Epstein files and the pedophile ring at the heart of it all. Despite the Iran crisis, the Jeffrey Epstein case has not disappeared.

The Russian "philosopher and propagandist, Alexander Dugin, has understood the Epstein scandal better than anyone, keeping his eyes firmly fixed on the West's pedophile problem. Here is what Dugin recently wrote about it:
"Because of the Epstein list the West is collapsing before our eyes. All the conspiracy theories have not merely been confirmed; they have far surpassed every previous version imaginable. The West has revealed itself as a demonic system of civilization at the very center of which stands a Satanic, cannibalistic sect that devours children, traffics women, orchestrates provocations around the world, manipulates financial markets and political processes, and performs black masses. In other words, only a tiny handful of Western politicians remain untouched by the Epstein network. So what are ordinary people in the West supposed to do now? Previously, if they didn't like the Democrats they'd vote for the Republicans. If the Republicans disappointed them, they'd switch to the Democrats. But now, who are they even supposed to vote for? And what are we to do now that humanity has adopted so many Western practices in education, when we have come to believe in their culture, when we remake their films, when we still rely on their financial instruments? The

situation, for the world, for history, for humanity itself, is truly extraordinary. We are literally living in a global state of emergency."[xxiv]

Is Dugin really worried about the West's demonic system of civilization? What happened to Dugin's fascination with the teachings of Aleister Crowley, who styled styled himself as "the Great Beast" of Revelation? During the late Soviet and early post-Soviet period, Dugin was a prominent member of Moscow's underground occult scene. He merged Crowley's concept of Chaos Magick with geopolitics. We must remember that Crowley wrote about ritual human sacrifice. Is it fair to make Satanism and pedophilia exclusively Western problems?

It is worth mentioning that Stalin's henchman, Lavrenty Beria, was a prolific serial rapist and sexual predator whose victims included underage girls. Following Joseph Stalin's death in 1953, Beria was arrested during an internal power struggle and put on trial. During the proceedings, prosecutors uncovered a 47-volume criminal dossier compiled from Beria's personal effects. The dossier contained a list of hundreds of women and young girls he had raped. Stalin evidently knew about Beria's predatory behavior toward girls. According to Svetlana Alliluyeva (Stalin's daughter), Beria was with her at Stalin's residence when Stalin called and ordered her to leave the house because he did not trust Beria with her. In 1992 the skeletons of several young women were found in the garden of Beria's former Moscow residence. What is even more explosive, in this regard, is that Beria was not the only pedophile to be appointed as chief of Russia's secret police. Putin has also been accused of pedophilia.

According to KGB/FSB defector Alexander Litvinenko, Putin was moved from the First Chief Directorate of the KGB to a unit in Leningrad because his bosses allegedly discovered he was a pedophile. Robert Dole, in a paper for the *Journal of Literature and Art Studies*, made the following observations about Litvinenko's allegations:
"What we know … comes mostly from the disclosures made by Alexander Litvinenko. According to Global News, Putin ordered Litvinenko's assassination after he accused Putin of being a pedophile. He [Litvinenko] was poisoned with polonium placed in his tea while he was in London on November 1, 2006, and died on November 23 in a London hospital. The names of Russian agents who executed him are Andrei Lugovoi and Dmitry Kovtum. They escaped back to Russia before they could be put on trial in England."[xxv]

Such a correlation! Trump is hiding a large body of Epstein files pertaining to a pedophile ring. At the same time, Putin murdered Alexander Litvinenko for accusing him of pedophilia. Please note, Litvinenko's accusation against Putin developed from an incident which occurred on Red Square on 28 June 2006. Putin approached a five-year-old boy

named Nikita Konkin. The Russian dictator stooped down in front of the boy, spoke to him, then lifted the boy's shirt and kissed him on the belly.

About this incident, Alexander Litvinenko wrote the following comments for the *Chechenpress*: "The explanation [for this incident] may be found if we look carefully at the so-called 'blank spots' in Putin's biography." According to Litvinenko,
"After graduating from the Andropov Institute, which prepares officers for the KGB intelligence service, Putin was not accepted into the foreign intelligence [service]. Instead, he was sent to a junior position in KGB Leningrad Directorate. This was a very unusual twist for a career of an Andropov Institute graduate with fluent German. Why did that happen with Putin?

"Because shortly before his graduation, his bosses learned that Putin was a pedophile. So say some people who knew Putin as a student at the Institute.

"The Institute feared to report this to their own superiors, which would cause an unpleasant investigation. They decided it was easier just to avoid sending Putin abroad under some pretext. Such a solution is not unusual for the secret services.

"Many years later, when Putin became the FSB director and was preparing for the presidency, he began to seek and destroy any compromising material collected against him by the secret services over earlier years. It was not difficult. Provided he himself was the FSB director. Among other things, Putin found videotapes in the FSB Internal Security directorate, which showed him making sex with some underage boys.

"Interestingly, the video was recorded in the same conspiratorial flat in Polyanka Street in Moscow where Russian Prosecutor-General Yuri Skuratov was secretly video-taped with two prostitutes. Later, in the famous scandal, Putin (on Roman Abramovich's instructions) blackmailed Skuratov with these tapes and tried to persuade the Prosecutor-General to resign. In that conversation, Putin mentioned to Skuratov that he himself was also secretly video-taped making sex in the same bed. (But of course, he did not tell it was pedophilia rather than normal sex.) Later, Skuratov wrote about this in his book Variant Drakona (pp. 153-54)." [xxvi]

Litvinenko was a professional investigator. He was a lieutenant colonel in the FSB – *the same rank Putin once held in the KGB*. Few in the Western media have dared to repeat Litvinenko's allegations. Who, after all, wants to drink radioactive tea? So we find that none of the documentaries about Litvinenko's death ever mention the pedophilia charges against Putin.

Like organized crime, narcotics trafficking, prostitution, and satanic cults, the world of pedophilia is a *secret world*. And right now, as society disintegrates, pedophilia seems to be a significant problem. And then there is the idea of this satanic connection that just won't go away. Researcher Nick Bryant wrote about how he came to investigate pedophile allegations in Nebraska when he was looking into satanic cult activity. Satanism, he admitted, is something about which he "accrued the least amount of corroboration."[xxvii]

As noted in Part Three of this series, the Franklin scandal involved the collapse of the Franklin Federal Credit Union, a bank used by the CIA in the 1980s. There were allegations of embezzlement of funds, child trafficking, and satanic ritual abuse associated with this institution and its chief officer, Larry King. The CIA's involvement with Franklin was problematic, given the child trafficking allegations. Prior to the Franklin scandal, there was the Finder's Movement, which was also allegedly involved in satanic abuse and child trafficking. According to Bryant, the CIA had previously lowered "an iron curtain on any investigation into the previously existing Finders Cult [mentioned in Federal documents] – even when U.S. Representatives pushed for an inquiry."[xxviii] It was alleged at the time that police investigations were dropped because it was said to be a "CIA internal matter."[xxix]

An internal matter?

What lies at the bottom of a moral sewer? *The stench of many unexamined lives.* All forms of evil share this same internal dynamic. There is always perversion, *imaginative oblivion*, a warping of consciousness. There is always a desire for power, a readiness for lies, and the persecution of innocence. In all that we have looked at, pedophilia is the most lucrative of all passages through the political underworld. But the darkest passage is *ritual abuse*.

Nick Bryant admits that witnesses of ritual abuse report things that are so outlandish he did not, at first, give them much credence. In 1992 the FBI issued a report out of its Behavioral Science Unit at Quantico debunking "all that wacky innuendo about ritual abuse," reassuring the public that such phenomena were "non-existent and they could sleep soundly at night." But the study showed something sinister and correlative. People from different regions, from different socio-economic classes, were reporting the *same phenomena*. According to Bryant, five hotlines for children were set up by an advocacy group in the mid-1990s which received 23,000 calls about ritual abuse of children. The favored explanation of the National Center for the Treatment of Dissociative Disorders in Denver, after studying 37 adults reporting ritual abuse of children, was "multiple personality disorder or dissociative personality disorder." This is a curious finding because the literature on this subject, since the time of Freud and Jung, has linked *sexual abuse* with dissociative disorders. According to Bryant,

"All the subjects said they had been ritually abused and/or tortured, had witnessed animal mutilations, been forced to take drugs, and received death threats – 83% said they had witnessed at least one adult or child sacrifice."[xxx]

Bryant then pointed to a 2007 study – the largest study to date touching on ritual abuse.
"Of 1,471 participants responding to the questionnaire ... 191 participants claimed to have experienced only ritual abuse, 69 said they had undergone [only] mind control, and 513 reported that they experienced both ritual abuse and mind control."

Of this same group, 704 reported satanic ritual abuse. Investigators were shocked and surprised by how many were making nearly identical claims. The percentages were in line with earlier studies as well. While Bryant initially thought the victims were traumatized and out of touch with reality, his later investigations into witness testimony showed powerful instances of corroboration which left him perplexed. According to Bryant,
"MPD [Multiple Personality Disorder] is the result of dissociation, and dissociation is caused by traumatic events that compel the mind to distance itself from those events because an individual is unable or unwilling to process them at the time. It's impossible to infer the exact nature of the 'psychological tricks' mentioned in the CIA documents I've acquired, and to specifically ascribe satanic ritual abuse and sexual abuse to the mind-control experiments is problematic; but the scant CIA mind-control documentation that has been recovered demonstrates that the agency was willing to use a variety of sadistic methodologies to further its research, including torture, concussions, large doses of psychotropic drugs, and frequent high-powered electroshock."[xxxi]

At this point it is worth mentioning a book which focusses on the testimony of Sidney Gottlieb who was the head of the CIA's MKUltra project. That book is titled *Project Mind Control: Sidney Gottlieb, the CIA, and the Tragedy of MKULTRA*. Aside from Gottlieb's testimony, which admits many disturbing aspects of MKUltra, we have very little to go on. CIA Director Richard Helms destroyed most of the records on MKUltra. Caution is here advised, given the bizarre nature of the allegations of supposed victims. According to Bryant, "Every self-proclaimed mind-control victim I've interviewed has said that satanic ritual abuse and sexual abuse were integral facets of the experimenters' methodologies." Furthermore, these victims appear to be "psychologically damaged," noted Bryant, who then explained,
"If I hadn't been directed to them by therapists whom I found to be credible, I never would have believed their accounts, because they were so divorced from mundane reality. In fact, even today, I have difficulties discerning whether some of them were psychologically damaged simply by their dysfunctional childhoods or by the CIA's mind-control experimentation."[xxxii]

How do we sort all the testimony and arrive at a sensible understanding? There are no easy answers. MKUltra began in 1953, after it was discovered that the Soviets were developing mind control techniques. Related to this, CIA Director Dulles spoke to a gathering of Princeton alumni on 10 April 1953, referring to a "sinister battle for men's minds" that was underway. He said that the Soviets "have developed brain perversion techniques, some of which are so subtle and so abhorrent to our way of life that we have recoiled from facing up to them."[xxxiii]

What did Dulles mean by "facing up to them"?

Mind control was explored by German scientists during World War II. Extensive experiments were conducted on concentration camp inmates, usually Polish, Soviet, or Jewish. Various drugs were used to "eliminate the will of the person examined." It appears that MKUltra was a continuation of the Nazi experiments, inspired by the fear that the Soviets had discovered advanced means of controlling human beings. It is widely believed that drugs, hypnosis, torture, and sex were major avenues for this research. According to Czech defector Jan Sejna, the Soviet program was interested in methods that neutralized the brain's ability to discriminate between true and false statements. Czech science, under the communists, made important breakthroughs in this area. In fact, the Russians integrated Czechoslovakian bio-chemical advances into their own weapon development programs, according to Sejna.[xxxiv]

The Americans, on their side, were interested in a "truth drug" during World War II, and marijuana was found to be the best drug for this purpose. LSD was later found to be unsuitable. In 1950, CIA Director Walter Bedell Smith, who was later suspected of being a KGB agent by the FBI, began something called Project Bluebird (later renamed Project Artichoke), which sought better interrogation drugs. Human subjects were unwittingly dosed with morphine, mescaline, and LSD. After Smith was sidelined due to FBI suspicions, Allen Dulles took over as CIA director and ordered the commencement of MKUltra as noted above. This project was, from everything we have seen, a fiasco where a few unbalanced scientists experimented on unwitting human subjects. Richard Helms would later say that the CIA had no alternative but to create such programs. Helms also said that the CIA was not responsible for scientists who performed unethical experiments and misused the funds. The wrongdoing was on them, not the agency.

It seems that wherever there is secrecy there is unaccountability, there are abuses and coverups. Secret organizations are inherently dangerous, even when they are tasked with our defense. This is also apparent in the government's approach to UAP/UFO research. Checks and balances are always necessary because things done in darkness can go awry in horrifying ways; that is, abuses are easily covered up in the dark. Of course, one must

exercise caution about wild claims. An element of hysteria cannot be avoided when terrorist methods are used on people. Some testimonies are so obviously false that we can dismiss them outright, like the claims of conspiracy theorist Cathy O'Brien. I have found her testimony to be nonsensical. She claimed to be an MKUltra mind-controlled sex slave of U.S. politicians and presidents. She described herself going in and out of the White House, where she would meet Dick Cheney. She described Cheney as doing things that were not part of his job as a congressman. It is as if she did not know when Cheney was Secretary of Defense. There are many errors of time and place in her story, and misunderstandings about how institutions work. Other self-proclaimed victims of ritual abuse, however, appear more credible, like Anneke Lucas and David Shurter; but one must use caution even here, since human memory is not entirely reliable even when the witnesses are honest.

Anneke Lucas, mentioned in an earlier part of this series, wrote a book about her alleged experiences as a child sex slave in Belgium during the early 1970s. She described a boy who was cooked and eaten, a girl who was beheaded, and babies she was forced to kill. She says she was in the same network as Dutroux (mentioned in Part 3), though she never met Dutroux. However, she described interactions she had with Michel Nihoul; and she names bigshots like David Rockerfeller and Evelyn de Rothschild. Lucas is a credible-sounding witness, and her story is plausible given what we know about the Dutroux case. Should we believe her?

Returning to the Franklin scandal, we also have John W. DeCamp's book. What we find in DeCamp as with Bryant, is testimony regarding an elite pedophile network stretching from Nebraska back to Washington, D.C. The children who came forward as witnesses were persecuted by the police and FBI. The whole operation is described in similar terms as the Epstein operation and fits with Anneke Lucas's description of the Belgian network.

There are many lenses for looking at these controversial issues. But as the world economy unravels, as people lose their jobs and some begin to starve, stories of this kind could grow into something more. After all, this is a pot that could boil over at any time. Mass hysteria produced witch hunts in the Middle Ages. We must never underestimate the power of mass formation psychosis in troubled times. But there is something more to all this. Consider Jules Michelet's famous account of the anti-satanist persecutions of the Middle Ages, where we read,

"The dead are dead; the millions of victims; Albigensians, Vaudois, Protestants, Moors, Jews, American Indians, sleep in peace. The standing martyr of the Middle Ages, the Sorceress, says no word; her ashes are scattered to the winds."[xxxvi]

Michelet lists various groups burned at the stake by the Inquisition. He wants to see the pagans avenged. He admires paganism. He wants paganism to return. At the beginning of his book, Michelet wrote,

"There are authors who assure us that a little while before the final victory of Christianity a mysterious voice was heard along the shores of the Aegean Sea, proclaiming, 'Great Pan is dead!'

"The old universal god of Nature is no more. Great the jubilation; it was fancied that, Nature being defunct, Temptation was dead too. Storm-tossed for so many years, the human soul was to enjoy peace at last.

"Was it simply a question of the termination of the ancient worship, the defeat of the old faith, the eclipse of time-honored religious forms? No! it was more than this. Consulting the earliest Christian monuments, we find in every line the hope expressed, that Nature is to disappear and life die out – in a word, that the end of the world is at hand."

Jeffrey Epstein might have put this quote on the wall of his island mansion. But Michelet is too tame, too humane. Epstein's correspondence is closer to that of Aleister Crowley, who famously wrote "Do what thou wilt is the whole of the law." In a 2006 email, Epstein wrote to his assistant, "the patron has no boundaries." In fact, others around Epstein held a similar view, as seen in their disdain for morality, with many in his circle showing a "haughty, smug cynicism."[xxxvi]

In 1862 Michelet presented his book, titled *Satanism and Witchcraft*, as a somewhat fanciful account of witches being rebels against Christian oppression. Michelet was writing this in the Victorian era, when Christianity appeared to reign supreme. We forget that Marx and Darwin were creatures of this same era. Early on, Kierkegaard warned his Danish countrymen that Bishop Mynster was not a Christian, that the Christians of Denmark were too pleased with themselves, too comfortable. So great was the hypocrisy of that age, that Friedrich Nietzsche suggested there had been only one Christian, who died on the cross. Outwardly the nineteenth century edifice was Christian. Inwardly a Hermetic transformation was already far advanced. It was, indeed, the "morning of the magicians," as outlined by Eric Voegelin. From Voegelin's philosophic perspective, satanism might be Gnosticism stripped down to its essentials, in its most extreme form; that is, as a metaphysical and spiritual rebellion. The new magicians are philosophers and scientists. As magic was seen as a method for cheating the laws of the universe, of cheating God – the new science evolved into a tool for *becoming* God (an ambition we have noticed before). According to Voegelin, "The idea that one of the main currents of European … thought is essentially gnostic sounds strange today, but this is not a recent discovery."

Voegelin outlined the deeper, philosophical threads which illuminate an occult infestation: (1) Bohme's theosophy; (2) Schelling's philosophy of nature; (3) Schleiermacher's doctrine of faith; and (4) Hegel's philosophy of religion. Our submergence into Gnosticism and Hermeticism had advanced sufficiently that a parallel occult revival, along with "paranormal" experimentation, became inevitable. "The submergence was so profound that when the gnostic movement reached its revolutionary phase its nature could no longer be recognized," noted Voegelin. It flowered into hundreds of forms. Voegelin added, *"The movements deriving from Marx and Bakunin, the early activities of Lenin, Sorel's myth of violence, the intellectual movement of neo-positivism, the communist, fascist, and national-socialist revolutions – all fell in a period ... when science was at a low point."*[xxxvii]

Michelet, who romanticized paganism, said that the game was up for the old gods of life, "who have so long kept up a vain simulacrum of vitality." One might say that the goat was on the meat-hook (as Pan was a deity part-goat and part human). "All is swallowed up in nothingness," wrote Michelet, because "Great Pan is dead!"[xxxviii] Michelet was an anti-clerical deist who saw paganism as a symbol of human liberation. He did not deny, in fact, the supernatural reality of the old religion. For him, witches were vestigial pagans and modern science was a kind of return to Nature.

One of the most readable British authors of the twentieth century, Colin Wilson, argued that witches were not always mere victims of superstition or hysteria. He documented cases where spells were cast and bad things happened. He argued, therefore, that the legal rationale for prosecuting witches was not altogether unreasonable because it was based on a witch's *intent* to cause harm. Of course, as Sir Walter Scott showed in his study of witchcraft, not all those burned as witches were witches. Many were innocent victims of mass hysteria or "mass formation" psychosis, a situation that promises to bring about a hard reset in our time.

It is laughable to think, when it comes to the subject of hysteria, that the same ideologists who say sea levels are rapidly rising, who say the oceans will boil, dismiss satanic ritual abuse as a "satanic panic" when they themselves are carried away with an environmental panic. Sad clowns and happy clowns are we. If we do not believe in some crazy superstition, then we believe in some farcical "scientific" theory. Few stop and consider what science is, how reason works – or how we know anything at all.

Here is something of special interest to the future of mankind: An exorcist, Fr. Chad Ripperger, has pointed to demonic phenomena as it relates to children. He has explained that demons attack marriage because they want to harm children.[xxxix] Demons prefer innocent victims. I once heard another exorcist say that anyone who abuses a child is

drawing demons to himself, is opening a door to occult powers that might well overtake and possess *him*. To a rationalist this sounds perfectly crazy. Yet a scientific psychologist, Carl Jung, warned that the Antichrist was perfectly real. As with Dostoevsky, Jung's latter writings were full of warnings. Stranger still, Patrick Harpur has analyzed what he calls "Daimonic Reality" using Jungian concepts. According to Harpur,

"The content of the unconscious is a sea of images. These are usually, but not exclusively, visual – they can be abstractions, patterns, ideas, inspirations and even moods. The images of the collective unconscious are representative of what Jung called archetypes. This was not a new idea – it goes back to Plato, who postulated an ideal world of forms, of which everything in this world was merely a copy…. The archetypes are paradoxical. They cannot be known in themselves, but they can be known indirectly through their images. They are, by definition, impersonal but they can manifest personally. For example, the archetype which lies … nearest to the surface is called the shadow. At a personal level, it embodies our inferior side…. It might appear… therefore, as a dark twin or a despised acquaintance or an idiot half-brother. At the same time, our personal shadows are rooted in a collective shadow, the archetype of evil, such as the Christian Devil represents."[xl]

Magic, astrology, and spiritualism have been in use since the beginnings of civilization. These "sciences" have fascinated kings and queens, generals and elite businessmen. John Dee was the court magician of Queen Elizabeth I. He was both spymaster and conjuror. At the same time, Queen Catherine de Medici of France used Michel Nostradamus for scrying. Both magicians allegedly built "magic mirrors." The successful predictions of Nostradamus made him into a household name, though his predictions displeased his royal patroness. In the autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini there is a remarkable scene of a nighttime summoning of demons in the coliseum at Rome. You can sneer at such stories, but you will never put an end to them.

Socrates Questions Donald Trump

If Socrates was allowed to question Donald Trump at a press conference, what questions would he ask?

Socrates: *In carrying out the duties of your office, Mr. President, is the purpose of presidential statements to present objective truth, or merely persuade the crowd that you are correct?*

Trump: *My opponents attack me constantly for telling the truth. Compared to other presidents I have been more candid, more forthcoming – at great cost to myself. Great cost. I will never lie to the American people.*

Socrates: *What about the documented inaccuracies that the media have pointed to in some of your statements?*

Trump: *When I can, I tell the truth…. I always like to be truthful.[xli]*

Socrates: *I have your book, Mr. President, The Art of the Deal.*

Trump. *A very good book. A beautiful book.*

Socrates: *I see this book was written in 1987, and you outline a remarkable philosophy.*

Trump: *This is a great compliment. Can I quote you on it?*

Socrates: *Of course, Mr. President. But here in this book you wrote, 'I play to people's fantasies…. People want to believe that something is the biggest and the greatest and the most spectacular. I call it truthful hyperbole. It's an innocent form of exaggeration – and it's a very effective form of promotion.'*

Trump: *An excellent quote, and very true.*

Socrates: *In keeping with your philosophy of exaggeration, you and your legal teams have openly acknowledged inflating numbers. You defended this as standard industry 'puffery' or salesmanship rather than fraud. Is that true?*

Trump: *There is nothing wrong with puffery. Everyone does it.*

Socrates: *But strictly speaking, you and your legal team were inflating the numbers?*

Trump: *What is your point?*

Socrates: *You affirm this as an 'innocent' practice – to give out numbers that are not the true numbers.*

Trump: *Yes.*

Socrates: *And this is not lying?*

Trump: *It's perfectly innocent. Everyone does it. Everyone knows it is done. It is perfectly harmless.*

Socrates: *What if people believe in you, believe in your numbers?*

Trump: *These are white lies. Very white. Innocent.*

Socrates: *What makes these lies innocent?*

Trump: *Nobody gets hurt.*

Socrates: *Nobody minds when you inflate your own accomplishments?*

Trump: *Everyone does it. Look, you are a philosopher, a very smart guy, ancient Greece, very high IQ. But I have to say, your clothes, Socrates – it's a bit of a disaster [laughter from off stage]. We need to get you a suit. A beautiful, sharp suit.*

Socrates: *You are very gracious. But tell me, is a ruler defined by the beauty of his garments or by the justice of his soul?*

Trump: *It's about winning. This is how things work in real life – maybe not in philosophy, but in real life. If you look good, you win. I've won my whole life. Real estate, television, the presidency – the greatest economy in history. People love it. They want a winner.*

Socrates: *I see your point. Most people envy a winner. But I am not sure what you mean by 'winning.' Perhaps I could ask you to comment. If you bomb a country and destroy its navy and air force, but that country retaliates by closing a strategic waterway on which your economy depends, are you the winner or a loser?*

Trump: *We won. They are defeated. A great victory, a magnificent victory by the greatest military, the most powerful military in the world.*

Socrates: *But the waterway remains closed.*

Trump: *If they do not open it soon, I will bomb them into the stone age.*

Socrates: *I think you are exaggerating again.*

Trump: *Look, they are already defeated. I told you.*

Socrates: *Isn't it a lie to say you have won a war when almost all the oil production of the entire Persian Gulf region has been cut off by your enemy?*

Trump: *Look, you're doing that thing – the Socratic thing. Very negative. Very unfair. You have to understand my position. We cannot allow Iran to have nuclear weapons.*

Socrates: *But your other enemies have nuclear weapons.*

Trump: *You should consider what happened to you back in Athens.*

Socrates: *It is true, of course, I was forced to drink hemlock. But then, the Athenian politicians were like you. Pericles, for example, told us that our sea power was unmatched. Other leaders envisioned the conquest of Sicily and Africa just as you envision the annexation of Canada and Greenland. But we lost the Thracian gold mines, a great source of wealth; and we lost most of our navy in Sicily, and then we lost the best part of our army. In the end, we lost control of the Bosphorus Strait and the Dardanelles from whence came our grain ships. We faced starvation so we surrendered to Sparta. You and your allies are facing a similar situation.*

Trump: *Everybody knows the Spartans. Legendary people. Tremendous warriors. Huge power. What was Athens? A bunch of philosophers and talkers. We all saw that movie about Sparta, about the* ***300*** *who defended against the Persians. Fantastic. Huge success at the box office. We see what happened. You cannot beat the Spartans. You should never have gone to war with Sparta. Very stupid. I would never have done that. Never.*

Socrates: *Athens was a democracy, which is what you call your country; and the Athenian leaders talked as you do now. They said, might makes right and power is all. This is the way you talk. Exactly like that. But tell me, if a ship is in a violent storm, do you want a captain who exaggerates to flatter the crew, or a captain who actually understands the art of navigation?*

Trump: *I have a natural instinct for piloting the ship-of-state. The experts – as navigators – ruined the ship for years. Only I can fix it. You have my book there. It's all about the art of the deal.*

Socrates: *To deal is to exchange. But can one exchange exaggeration for truth without getting hurt? You have said before that you use 'truthful hyperbole' – exaggeration to make things seem grander than they are.*

Trump: *Like I said, my exaggerations are merely promotional. You have to build excitement. If you don't tell people they are the greatest, they won't believe in you.*

Socrates: *Do you believe in other people's exaggerations?*

Trump: *You overthink everything. My voters know what I mean. They feel what I am saying. It's about passion. It's about spirit.*

Socrates: *Then I must ask my final question, Mr. President. If a nation is guided by passion and illusion, rather than by wisdom and truth, can it ever truly be great, or is it merely wearing a beautiful suit while the soul within it grows sick?*

Trump: *[Shrugging and smiling] All I know is, the ratings for this dialogue are going to be through the roof. Tremendous numbers. Thank you, Socrates. Great guy, even if he asks too many questions.*

Vlad Vexler, Anthony Scaramucci, and Marcus Aurelius

Vlad Vexler's recent interview with Anthony Scaramucci is loaded with psychological observations about Donald Trump. At the beginning of the interview, Mr. Vexler described

Trump as a "Cluster B" personality: "I see a guy … who is after narcissistic supply, a guy who does not have a stable sense of self…. He is not authentic. He can't grow…" Vexler went even further, suggesting that Trump is a sociopath who "doesn't think other people are real…. He doesn't experience Iran as quite real. He doesn't experience Malania as quite real." In making such remarks, Vexler wanted some pushback from Scaramucci, who was once part of Trump's team. Scaramucci replied in the following way:
"[People] are objects in Trump's field of vision. They are real, but they are not human. That is how I would say it…. Malania is an object in his field of vision … we are all just objects in his field of vision. If we are useful, he will transact with us. If we are not useful, he will run us over with the car – or he doesn't care. He has no sense of empathy towards anybody and he is extremely detached; so, [if] you want to kill a million people – you remember what Stalin said, 'One death is a tragedy, one million deaths is a statistic.' That's Donald Trump. It's all noise to him…. [But] he is not really incompetent. He is incompetent in terms of being a true Stalin/Putin-like dictator … [because] he is lazy, and he can't finish things because he has Attention Deficit [Disorder], and he has surrounded himself with less-than-competent loyalists. All of that I agree with; but there is a competence to his political instincts. There is a competence to understanding the Culture War in the United States. And there is a competence [if we understand] his personal goal; and let me just tell you what his personal goal is: goal number one is 'I want to make money. Billions.' And goal number two is 'I want all eyes on me. I seek attention and I seek money.' And if you see everything through that narrow prism in Donald Trump's mind, you will understand everything he is doing; and you will understand why he is doing it. And if you don't think knocking the Epstein files off the front pages of The New York Times, etc., wasn't part of the goal of this war, then you don't really understand Donald Trump."

Okay. Trump bombed Iran to get the Epstein files off the front pages. Trump wants money and attention. He is transactional. He will run you over with the car if that suits him, or he will ignore you. And yet, there is much more to him than that. According to Scaramucci, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney has been the most openly critical Western leader towards Trump, yet Trump talks to Carney more than any other Western leader. At the same time, says Scaramucci, Trump feels antipathy towards those closest to him, even as they feel antipathy towards him. Scaramucci noted,
"When he [Trump] is in the room with the sycophants, around the oval-shaped table in the cabinet room, and they are all waxing glowingly about him, he hates it; because … I have been in meetings with him where he'll come up the steps back up on the campaign plane and he will [say] … 'Can you believe the ass-kissing that is going on here?' So he is very, very, very complex…. Is he a narcissist? He is 100 percent a narcissist. Is he into narcissistic supply, as you are saying? Yes, he is. But he is very … complex. Now, he is hated. I can tell you that. I can tell you that everybody hates him … from Malania to his children – maybe the grandchildren like him a little – but they find him weird, because he is

a weird guy…. He has to be the king of every moment…. He may not know something, but you can't tell him [because] … he'll flip out…. So all of this fits into this pattern of narcissism."[xlii]

Other direct witnesses have offered a similar impression of Donald Trump.[xliii] Of course, we want to believe he will Make America Great Again. But with these deficits, how can he? According to Scaramucci, Trump has instincts. He sees that the left has misread a large section of the population (which is not at all educated). The left disregards them as a basket of deplorables. By pretending to love these people, Trump can win elections. He can have power. It is that simple. Trump took over the Republican party by doing this.

According to Jacques Ellul, a theorist of mass manipulation,
"propaganda tends to schematize public opinion. Where there is propaganda, we find fewer and fewer nuances and refinements of detail or doctrine. Rather, opinions are more incisive; there is only black and white, yes and no."[xliv]

Trump saw that the left had schematized public opinion and the Republicans were not appreciating the natural advantages this gave them. Trump understood this instinctively. Republicans were not consistently saying "no" to the left's "yes." They were afraid of being ostracized by the media, by the intellectuals. But Trump did not care. He stood up and said "no" to the left, and roughly half the voting public went over to him. This was Trump's area of competence and insight. He knew that democracy is intimately bound up with the idea of "progress," and the Democratic left had embarked on a downward path of restricting consumption, lowering the carbon footprint, eradicating meat from the human diet in favor of vegetables and bugs. Seeing this clearly, Trump promised to "Make American Great Again."

The Trump phenomenon was something the Democrats misunderstood. They thought Trump was dumb and crazy. They belittled and ignored him the same way they belittled and ignored millions of Americans. Trump won those people over, using the power of suggestion and the promise of a better future. He used rallies. He spoke like a regular person. He practiced a kind of hypnotic suggestion on crowds of people who were, in fact, suggestible. Gustave Le Bon explained this hypnotic suggestibility as follows:
"Contagion is a phenomenon easy to establish the presence of, but not easy to explain. It must be classed among those phenomena of a hypnotic order…. In a crowd every sentiment and act is contagious, and contagious to such a degree that an individual readily sacrifices his personal interest to the collective interest. This is an aptitude very contrary to his nature, and of which man is scarcely capable except when he makes part of a crowd."[xlv]

There is a mysterious power in a crowd, noted Le Bon. It is a psychic power, or what Le Bon referred to as "magnetism." Mystics have talked about egregores, sometimes describing them in terms of thought-forms arising from the emotions of large groups. Some even envision an occult entity, or group soul. Mark Stavish wrote a book not long ago on this subject titled, *Egregores: The Occult Entities That Watch Over Human Destiny*. Le Bon would not have gone so far in assessing the mysterious power of a crowd, yet Le Bon envisioned a process not unlike the operation of a group mind. All members of a crowd are vulnerable to suggestion by someone acting as a "hypnotist." According to Le Bon, "The conscious personality has entirely vanished [in this process]: will and discernment are lost. All feelings and thoughts are bent in the direction determined by the hypnotizer…."[xlvi] The charismatic leader, in this case, is the one who hypnotizes the masses. According to Le Bon,

"The individual forming part of a psychological crowd … is no longer conscious of his acts. In his case … certain faculties are destroyed, others may be brought to a high degree of exaltation. Under the influence of a suggestion, he will undertake the accomplishment of certain acts with irresistible impetuosity…. The individualities in the crowd who might possess a personality sufficiently strong to resist the suggestion are too few in number to struggle against the current. At the utmost, they may be able to attempt a diversion by means of different suggestions. It is in this way … that a happy expression, an image opportunely evoked, has occasionally deterred crowds from the most bloodthirsty acts…."[xlvii]

Belonging to a psychological crowd lowers a man "several rungs in the ladder of civilization. Isolated, he may be a cultivated individual; in a crowd, he is merely a barbarian. Here is where Trump's special talent comes in, insofar as Trump has established a bond with his followers. It might be said that Trump knows how to *play* the Pied Piper. Ironically, during the 2016 election, the Hillary Clinton campaign used the term "Pied Piper" to describe their electoral strategy. There was a leaked Democrat memo which suggested media outlets should "elevate" Trump and other far-right candidates to pull the entire Republican Party toward extreme positions that would make the eventual nominee unpalatable to general election voters. But this plan backfired because the Democrats did not understand mass formation. The Americans they insulted were quickly bonded to Trump and they lost the election.

Political analysts remain sharply divided over whether Donald Trump is genuinely concerned for his followers or if he views them – as Scaramucci suggested – as useful objects. What we see now, in Trump's second term, is an unambiguous transactional rhetoric. The cynicism of this is unmistakable. Political analysts have noticed that Trump remains intensively focused on his personal grievances, legal battles, and retribution.

I was recently moved, while reading an uncharacteristic outburst of the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius. The passage is in his *Meditations*, where Marcus wrote, "A black heart! A womanish, willful heart; the heart of a brute, a beast of the field; childish, stupid, and false; a huckster's heart, a tyrant's heart."[xlviii] These words involuntarily brought Donald Trump to mind. I wondered why this passage had such an effect. Then I realized that Donald Trump is the polar opposite of Marcus Aurelius. Try to imagine Trump following the emperor's prescription:

"Never value the advantages derived from anything involving a breach of faith, loss of self-respect, hatred, suspicion ... insincerity, or the desire for something which has to be veiled and curtained. One whose chief regard is for his own mind, and for the divinity within him and the service of its goodness, will strike no poses, utter no complaints, and crave neither for solitude nor yet for a crowd."[xlix]

Marcus Aurelius also wrote, "Outward things can touch the soul not a whit, they have no power to sway or move it."[l] We all know how Trump frequently uses platforms like Truth Social to launch late-night or early-morning counterattacks against critics, ranging from high profile politicians to late-night comedians and private citizens. He displays an intense preoccupation with quantifiable markers of his status, such as television ratings, crowd sizes, poll numbers, and his placement on wealth lists. Disputing these numbers routinely triggers a correction from him. But as Scaramucci noted, Trump cannot stand to be corrected himself. Marcus Aurelius wrote that if anyone

"can refute me – show me I'm making a mistake or looking at things from the wrong perspective – I'll gladly change. It's the truth I'm after, and the truth never harmed anyone. What harms us is to persist in self-deceit and ignorance."[li]

In his interview with Vlad Vexler, Anthony Scaramucci said something that bears repeating. He said, "Trump is a symptom, not the disease." In the last analysis, Trump was not elected because he is rich, though being rich did not hurt him. He was elected because he was a celebrity who knew how to comfort people who had been neglected, who had been treated badly, by a system that has turned against them with open borders and anti-white racism. Trump does not have any real solutions to America's problems. He simply knows how to win votes. He has the trick, the insight, the method.

In Thomas Carlyle's *Latter-Day Pamphlets* we find the following passage: "Your ship cannot double Cape Horn by its excellent plans of voting. The ship may vote this and that, … [but] the ship, to get round Cape Horn, will find a set of conditions already voted for … by the ancient Elemental Powers…."[lii] This was Carlyle's warning about "democracy." If you are in dangerous waters, and you need a good captain, voting may not work. And yet, America became a great country under elected presidents. Carlyle admitted, "Sure enough, America is great, and in many respects a blessed and hopeful phenomenon."[liii]

Nevertheless, he knew the country was headed for trouble because winning votes, in the long run, is not a proper qualification for office. Consequently, he thought that democracy and equality had delivered America up to "Anarchy-plus-a street constable." Carlyle thought the initial success of the American Republic owed everything to the country's abundance of land. In the end, however, he said the policing would cease to be effective when abundance was no more. Carlyle wrote,

"Cease to brag to me of America, and its model institutions and constitutions. To men in their sleep there is nothing granted in this world: nothing, or as good as nothing, to men that sit idly caucusing and ballot-boxing on the graves of their heroic ancestors, saying, 'It is well, it is well!' Corn and bacon are granted: not a very sublime boon, on such conditions; a boon moreover which, on such conditions, cannot last! – No: America too will have to strain its energies, in quite other fashion than this; to crack its sinews, and all but break its heart, as the rest of us have had to do, in thousand-fold wrestle with the Pythons and mud-demons, before it can become a habitation for the gods. America's battle is yet to fight; and we, sorrowful though nothing doubting, will wish her strength for it. New Spiritual Pythons, plenty of them; enormous Megatherions, as ugly as were ever born of mud, loom huge and hideous out of the twilight Future on America; and she will have her own agony, and her own victory, but on other terms than she is yet quite aware of."[liv]

Prosperity is not wisdom, said Carlyle. It is not going to save America from the Spiritual Pythons and Megatherions (i.e., colossal snakes) that democratic politics engenders. Carlyle warned that a "Roast-goose with apple-sauce for the poorest workingman" is something, "thanks to your respect for the street constable, and your continents of fertile waste land; but that, even if it could continue, is by no means enough; that is not even an instalment towards what will be required of you."[lv]

And what of America's native genius for self-government? Carlyle wrote that America had given birth to millions of "the greatest bores ever seen in this world before, – that hitherto is their feat in History!" In writing this insult, Carlyle was denying American exceptionalism. "The Universe itself is a Monarchy and Hierarchy," he wrote. There is no escape from the great question of nobility versus ignobility. The noble, Carlyle explained, have "the duty of directing and controlling the Ignoble…."[lvi] You cannot succeed with a constitution that turns things the other way around. "The Noble in the high place, the Ignoble in the low," wrote Carlyle; that is, in all times and in all countries, the Almighty Maker's Law." What happens, then, when an ignoble man takes control of the highest office in the land? In his bluntness, if Carlyle were alive today, he would likely describe Donald Trump the "Sham-Noblest," solemnly consecrated and "slavishly adhered to from old wont … a practical blasphemy, and Nature will nowise forget it."[lvii]

Towards the end of his autobiography, Eric Voegelin said that the motivation of his work, which culminated in a philosophy of history, was the realization that he was "hemmed in, if not oppressed, from all sides by a flood of ideological language – meaning thereby language symbols that pretend to be concepts but in fact are unanalyzed … topics."[lviii] Voegelin said that there is no community of language between a person who uses words carefully, and honestly, and those who talk nonsense. You cannot have a debate or discussion with ideologists. You can only study them. Voegelin wanted to rescue political thought from degraded forms of discourse, and from people who are functional illiterates. After watching Trump's political career for the past decade, we must admit that he is not as ideologically corrupt as his opponents. However, he is a functional illiterate. His political instincts allowed him to reach high office, but those same instincts cannot rescue him from the consequences of being elected. We wait and hope there will be peace in the Middle East, but we should not expect good results. President Trump has committed several errors that reveal his incapacity. He attacked Iran without having the necessary forces to keep the Strait of Hormuz open. He alienated his allies. He is also courting his enemies, which shows how far along he is in the usual self-deceptive thinking of America's business class. Whereas, the Democratic Party has ruined the United States with an insane domestic policy; Trump ruins America with an insane foreign policy.

The Last Word: Carlyle and Weaver

We may be approaching the final crisis stage of modern so-called "democracy." Thomas Carlyle traced the first crisis stage of democracy in his famous history of the French Revolution. Towards the end of this life, Carlyle commented on the growing power of the masses (and their leaders) in his *Latter-Day-Pamphlets*. For Carlyle, the "forward" march of egalitarian democracy had exhausted its heroic possibilities during the French Revolution. By 1850, his writings implied that modern democracy was worthless.

Exactly one hundred years later, Richard Weaver anticipated a process of civilizational dissolution through intellectual fragmentation, materialism, egotism, and hedonism. Weaver suggested that civilization owed much to "the primitive phase of a people, in which there are powerful feelings of 'oughtness' directed toward the world … before the failure of nerve has begun."[lix]

According to Weaver, the collapse of "oughtness" has occurred through the rejection of *distinction* and *hierarchy*. Consequently, we have developed a perverted sense of what a statesman ought to be. This is why we have been led by presidents like Barack Obama, Joe Biden, and Donald Trump. Such men are anti-heroic. We might call them "salesmen" or "actors" in the same sense that Hitler was an "actor," or in the same sense Richard Wagner

was accused of being an actor by Nietzsche.[lx] Hitler's sickness was observable in his turbulent and histrionic self-dramatization, and in his power-seeking narcissism. These last three American presidents, lacking Hitler's artistic flare for mimicry, nonetheless have mirrored the German leader's histrionic traits. Obama and Biden were grandiose and insincere. Note their seductive behavior. For example, Obama's many poses – of firm confidence, of intellectual seriousness, of moral depth. Obama's weakness disgusted his own national security advisor when he begged Congress to take the lead in acting against Assad in Syria, when he crawled to Putin for a solution, and when he proposed to unilaterally disarm the United States of its nuclear arsenal. Biden's histrionic side is best seen in his interactions with voters, in his pretense of being a regular working class "Joe." All of it was dishonest, inauthentic. Trump is the same thing in a different package.

What do our last three presidents signify? In essence, my suggestion is that they represent an endpoint. In this they are not special. Rather, they are interchangeable end-pieces. They are even interchangeable with the candidates who ran against them: John McCain (2008), Mitt Romney (2012), Hillary Clinton (2016), and Kamala Harris (2024). These last-named "leaders" were no less histrionic and narcissistic than the candidates who beat them at the polls. All these people, however they might differ in background, were cut from the same cloth; that is, they were all *people of the lie*. They all lived unexamined lives by prostituting themselves before a society that, in the words of Richard Weaver, wants things, but regards payment "as an imposition or as an expression of malice…."[lxi] This is the psychology of the spoiled child, according to Weaver. Whoever does not give satisfaction in this political system is destined for defeat. According to Weaver, Americans have been spoiled in the following way:

"The scientists have given him [the American] the impression that there is nothing he cannot know, and false propagandists have told him that there is nothing he cannot have. Since the prime object of the latter is to appease, he has received concessions at enough points to think that he may obtain what he wishes through complaints and demands. This is but another phase of the rule of desire."[lxii]

Americans have also been "given the notion that progress is automatic, and hence he is not prepared to understand impediments; and the right to pursue happiness he has not unnaturally translated into a right to have happiness, like a right to the franchise."[lxiii]

We are surrounded in our politics, then, by hedonistic cravings and unrealistic demands. We want goodies from our politicians. We want "truthful hyperbole." What comes from this is the normalization of disordered personalities *as leaders*. This is not an environment for cultivating heroic leadership, honesty, or promoting strength of character.

The great illusion of the moment might be that the West appears on the brink of three great victories: (1) the defeat of Russia in Ukraine; (2) the overthrow of the Iranian clerical regime; (3) the defeat of the communist regimes of Latin America. As noted by military historian John Mosier, whose Substack on the Ukraine War is not to be missed,[lxiv] the Russians have tended to bungle their wars, though they sometimes prevail by sheer numbers and tenacity over time. But given the size of Russia, and the ruthlessness of the Russian leaders, this kind of optimism should be treated with skepticism.

In the case of Iran, prompt action by U.S. troops might have caused enough panic in Tehran to collapse the regime quickly, through mass defections from the police and army; or, just as likely, an impromptu American invasion might have resulted in heavy American combat losses. Back in January, the president's promise to the Iranian people was full of bravado and exaggeration. Many were fooled when President Trump said, "Help is on the way"; but thousands of protestors were slaughtered while America took it's time to set up a decapitation strike that failed. Only ground troops coming to the aid of the Iranian people could have had the necessary moral effect to collapse the regime. In history, small bodies of troops have overthrown powerful regimes. But never has a regime been overthrown by airstrikes without opposing troops on the ground. The truth is, President Trump and the American people did not want to shed American blood to free Iran, so Trump's statement that "help was on the way" was *untruthful* hyperbole. We also find this same hyperbole at work in Trump's strange Latin American policy, where the kidnapping of President Maduro and his wife was falsely portrayed as a "regime change."

Trump is the kind of person Weaver was pointing to when he wrote of "the modern knower" who may be "compared to an inebriate who, as he senses his loss of balance, endeavors to save himself by fixing tenaciously upon certain details and thus affords the familiar exhibition of positiveness and arbitrariness."[lxv]

Loss of balance is signified by many changes of plan, zigzags, false starts and sudden stops. As crazy as it sounds, Trump asked for a plan to invade Greenland which special forces commanders refused on the grounds that such an invasion would be illegal (i.e., against the Washington Treaty) and that Congress would never support such an invasion. Given resistance by U.S. generals, Trump's push for Greenland never got off the ground. Yet, Trump's desire to invade Greenland reveals the most significant psychological fact we have before us. It is all, as Weaver said, a familiar "exhibition of positiveness and arbitrariness."

Trump is supposedly a politically aware person. But he cannot formulate a proper picture of the strategic situation in his mind. Why, for example, is Greenland an important land mass when California and New York have been lost to socialism? This shows that Trump is

not playing chess or even checkers. Only when we realize this can we assess his moves against Venezuela, his verbal threats to Iran, Colombia, and Cuba. Trump is not going to follow through in a way that produces victory. In fact, he is not concerned with victory. He is only concerned with appearing victorious. At the end of the day successes will be inflated even as failures are blamed on somebody else. Trump's talking points are full of self-contradictions, equivocations, bluff and bluster. He will shoot at friend and foe alike. On reflection, what we see in Trump's policy is not merely a cognitive deficit, but a disconnect from reality. Weaver wrote,

"The man of self-control is he who can consistently perform the feat of abstraction. He is therefore trained to see things under the aspect of eternity, because form is the enduring part. Thus we invariably find in the man of true culture a deep respect for forms." [lxvi]

Donald Trump has no respect for forms, for consistency, for structure or culture. He is not a strategist, though he employs stratagems. He is a conniving, scatterbrained, blowhard. He does not realize that deep thoughts lie in old observances.[lxvii] His style only fits simplistic themes. His rhetoric and his TV persona are ochlocratic. Rather than making America Great Again, he signifies the country's decline. He is the type of leader who appears immediately before Caesarism breaks the dictature of money.[lxviii] And here we need to offer a correction. Donald Trump is not the second coming of Caesar. He is to Julius Caesar what Napoleon III was to Napoleon I. As Anthony Scaramucci said, Trump is lazy and never finishes anything. He cannot take the measure of anything, failing to see the underlying structure of events, consistently misreading strategic situations – like when he told President Zelenskyy that Ukraine had "no cards" to play, or when he prematurely declared victory over Iran. Weaver explained this incapacity as follows: "for measure imparts structure, and it is structure which is essential to intellectual apprehension."[lxix]

A few years back, when Andy Ngo lay bleeding on a Portland street, he could hear a transexual antifa militant (who identified as a satanist) shouting triumphant profanities. A combination of head trauma and leftwing taunts gave Andy Ngo his point of departure for a book about how antifa wanted to destroy America. In that moment of being beaten, Andy Ngo understood something about the trajectory of Western civilization – something akin to the insights of Thomas Carlyle after the revolutionary mayhem of 1848. The disordered always seek to destroy order, and the order they hate the most is the one that best preserves the freedom to ask questions. The more this freedom can be overridden by "democracy" or "egalitarianism" or "socialism," or "bureaucracy," the happier the disordered element feels.

In 1850 Carlyle asked, "To prosper in this world, to gain felicity and improvement, either for a man or a nation, there is but one thing requisite." That one thing, according to Carlyle, was not the violence of a revolutionary mob, or the presumption of a deluded voting majority. It was that "the man or nation can discern what the true regulations of the

Universe are in regard to him and his pursuit, and can faithfully and steadfastly follow these. These will lead him to victory…."[lxx]

Plato said, the form of government is not decisive; rather, the soul of the founder is decisive. And so, Carlyle seconded Plato when he wrote that it does not matter what type of government you have if it finds the path of true regulation. In all our disorders and false narratives and paranoid misinterpretations, we have been drifting from the path of true regulation. If idiotic rabble are staffing our system of checks and balances, forgetting to emulate the virtues of George Washington, what should we expect? Even if one supposes that President Trump, with all his zigzags and inconsistencies, is leading us in the right general direction (by accident or design), his party appears as an increasingly disordered crowd of grifters, sycophants, and misfit ideologues. They are as lamentable as the Democrats, though more factious and plain-speaking. No constitution can protect a country from a rabble so ill-constituted.

MAGA's erraticism cannot be a solution. Trump's incoherence is, at best, a delaying tactic. Now, more than ever, our periodic elections become problematic in the light of the country's division between nationalists and socialists; for the process now leads to the swinging of a pendulum that goes left and right, further and further with each swing; so that the left is bound to recover its control as the right fails, as the currency fails, as the markets collapse from the closing of the Strait of Hormuz. Soviet strategic planners in the 1960s said that America was "a volatile society." And now we see that they were right. And Trump is not a stabilizer of this volatility. He has been an exploiter of it.

As a brief aside, some educated readers will undoubtedly object to my quotations from Thomas Carlyle, saying that Carlyle prefigured the Nazis. But this is not fair, since Carlyle's ideas were inaccessible to National Socialism's functional illiterates. Like Nick Fuentes, Alex Jones, and Tucker Carlson, the National Socialist supporters of Hitler were primarily concerned with their own personal aggrandizement. As John Reed learned in Moscow, to his dismay, the Bolsheviks who followed Lenin were also self-aggrandizing.[lxxi] For Carlyle, true leaders are heroes marked by truthfulness and vision. They are not concerned with personal aggrandizement. Providence, he explained, cannot accomplish anything with the man who self-aggrandizes. Carlyle said that without the formative power of Providential action through heroic men, everything would fall into ruin. Of course, there are seasons in which nothing grows, when all heroes are of the tragic kind – or none are heroic at all.

Carlyle suggested that it was man's task to "ascertain the monition of the gods in regard to our affairs…." How, indeed, do we "decipher, with best fidelity, the eternal regulation of the Universe: and read, from amid such confused embroilments of human clamor and folly, what the real Divine Message to us is?"[lxxii] Only the heroic man succeeds at this task. Consider, then, what democracy signifies from this point of view. When it comes to democracy, noted Carlyle, deciphering with fidelity the eternal regulation of the Universe is not possible by counting heads (i.e., universal suffrage). The ballot box will ***not*** give us the answers we require. But then, Americans are not interested in answers that involve hard truths and difficult choices. We want the shopping mall regime. We want to bribe the barbarians. Let us run the debt higher, leaving our grandchildren to pay the price. Let us avoid confronting our enemies. But the debt will come due, and our enemies will attack, and the crops will fail, and the cupboard will be bare. Carlyle wondered at the emergence of a confused expectation that "perhaps the chief end of man being now … to make money and spend it, his interests in the Universe having become amazingly simplified of late;

capable of being voted on with effect by almost anybody."[lxxiii] He was baffled, supposing we had entered upon "strange spiritual latitudes indeed." But how was human nature so transformed? "Within the last half-century or so, either the Universe or else the heads of men must have altered very much," Carlyle observed. He then explained,
"Half a century ago ... the Universe, wherever I could hear tell of it, was wont to be of somewhat abstruse nature; by no means carrying its secret written on its face, legible to every passerby; on the contrary, obstinately hiding its secret from all foolish, slavish, wicked, insincere persons, and partially disclosing it to the wise and noble-minded alone, whose number was not the majority in my time!" [lxxiv]

We have misunderstood our situation. We have adopted the wrong ideas. We have failed to reflect. We are so accustomed to insincerity and exaggeration that we have fooled ourselves into believing hyperbole. In the marketplace, the consumer became a god without correction from the office of censor.[lxxv] Consequently, there could be no restraint placed on the importation of cheap Chinese junk. Market hedonism has triumphed. The whole capitalist system, having done away with aristocratic values, has devolved into a degenerate kind of managerial feudalism – with an academically inspired bureaucratic socialism in the foreground. Given that this is how democratic capitalism has played out, a major correction is inevitable. This correction will likely come in the form of war and/or economic collapse. Some will says this is unwarranted pessimism. Hopefully that is the case. But the Strait of Hormuz is closed, and Russia is threatening nuclear war. At the same time, China is subverting Latin America right out from under us.

But the stock market is doing so good. Right?

Carlyle was skeptical of economic optimism. "If the unfathomable Universe has decided to *reject* Human Beavers pretending to be men," he wrote, "[it] will abolish pretty rapidly perhaps, in hideous mud-deluges, their 'markets'…." [lxxvi] The dictature of money and its political instrument (democracy) will be broken on the wheel of Caesarism, said Oswald Spengler. And it is now happening, before our eyes: Shortly after Christmas the price of silver threatened to reach $100 an ounce. Gold has bounced just above, then just below, $5,000 an ounce. The financial structure is one of those things we live by, and it is beginning to crack.

"Historically speaking," wrote Carlyle, "I believe there was no Nation that could subsist upon Democracy."[lxxvii] And what nation has subsisted for long on too much prosperity, on the rule of human beavers led by half-educated billionaires? And strangely, even now democracy is considered the only proper form of the state by Western socialists and liberals and nationalists alike – all other forms of the state rated as evil (i.e., aristocracy is evil, monarchy is evil, etc.). The left especially uses the word "democracy" all the time as if it

were something virtuous in itself; but the word, as used today, is nothing more than a slogan, a meaningless regurgitation among other meaningless regurgitations.

Pundits quote Churchill's statement that democracy is the worst form of government, except for all others. As an educated aristocrat, Churchill almost certainly began his sentence with the intention of quoting Aristotle; but then he drew back from committing an undemocratic *faux pas*. Churchill was subject to elections himself and thought it wiser to reverse his statement mid-sentence with a qualifying phrase. In other words, he had intended to affirm what Aristotle said about democracy being the worst form of government. Truth be told, the British and American constitutions were never supposed to be purely democratic or socialistic. They were supposed to be a mixture of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy (as noted earlier). But knowledge of the cycle of the simple forms of the state has disappeared in our time. Almost nobody knows about it, and nobody talks about it in front of large audiences.

American philosopher George Sanatayana said democracy was the unrealizable dream of a society of patrician plebians. Thus, he placed democracy geographically nearer to Land of Oz than to Kansas (so to speak). Robert Michels, focusing on the functioning of democracy, said that democracy is just another way of organizing oligarchy.[lxxviii] Questioning the great democratic myth, Michels realized that all systems are run by an elite, without exception, because society cannot *function* with everyone equally in charge. Such would be an absurdity. In fact, society must have representatives, leaders, organizers, commanders, etc. Someone must hold power; and someone must possess the knowledge and reason by which power is responsibly wielded.

So rare are the qualities of mind and character needed for true statesmanship that Machiavelli advised rulers that it is often better to do nothing than to attempt something statesmanlike. A wise statesman is not of "the people," or distillable from a crowd of "patrician plebians." In history, many politicians are foolish rather than wise. Most are dishonest rather than honest. Of course, a few might rate as geniuses of treachery;[lxxix] but intelligence is not as common as one might suppose. For every Metternich or Bismarck there are three as clueless as Ribbentrop and one as treacherous as Talleyrand. America has had one truly brilliant secretary of state, John Quincy Adams, and a few others who were competent, like Hamilton Fish. More numerous, by far, were the incapable and inept – among them, Robert Smith, James Buchanan, John Sherman, William Jennings Bryan, Warren Christopher, John Kerry, Madeleine Albright, and Hillary Clinton. These personalities, in fact, have proven to be, in many instances, masters of disaster – like George Marshall and Henry Kissinger, who sank whole regions of Asia into communism, yet they are lauded as "great" statesmen. Always they are specialists at managing their own image.[lxxx] One thinks of Neville Chamberlain and Lord Halifax from 1938-40, flying to

Munich, making dramatic gestures that amounted to a series of self-inflicted wounds. Had Chamberlain and Halifax remained in charge of the United Kingdom through the evacuation at Dunkirk they would have made a disastrous peace with Hitler in 1940.

One sees that history is a minefield of potential blunders which are avoided or actuated by individual actors (not by "institutions"). To hide the importance of extraordinary individuals in statecraft and war, academic mediocrities have slaved for decades to affirm the idea that history is made by "social forces" rather than by outstanding men (i.e., Thomas Carlyle's heroes). And so we have a corrupted historiography, written by collectivists – with an emphasis on "the social system" or the inertial power of "historical forces." The individual is eliminated from history. In this grim lane of thought, one encounters the doctrine of the state, which statism prefers. It is, in the words of Hegel, "the actuality of the Ethical Ideal." Here one makes a political casserole made of the usual progressive-democratic mayonnaise, with chopped celery as the crunchy nothing of "absolutely rationality." But, as Carlyle demonstrated in his writings, democracy cannot be *The Absolute*. The people are not God, neither is a voting majority. As Eric Voegelin observed, all this theologizing about the state (by Hegel and others) is completely uninteresting in politics. The state, he said, has "to do with human things, and if in place of the men who are the representatives [of society] we put the state as cliché in this way, as Hegel does … then we have already got completely away from political reflection…."[lxxxi]

Democracy is one of the principal clichés of modernity. Few people consider what it real boils down to; namely, certain people getting elected, usually by making *false promises*. Mark Twain said, "It could probably be shown by facts and figures that there is no distinctly native American criminal class except Congress." Even now, what kind of leadership do we see in Congress?

Carlyle and Voegelin both insisted that everything depends on the quality of society's leaders – in letters and government, politics and war. Look at our recent presidents: Obama was weak. Joe Biden was senile. Trump is erratic. Why do we have such leaders? It was Hitler's achievement, noted Voegelin, to recognize and exploit the contemptibility of millions of people in Germany, then to exploit the contemptibility of the appeasers in London and Paris. This analysis is shocking, but unanswerable. It is important, said Voegelin, that one must study the period leading to Hitler's rise "to prevent oneself from becoming as contemptible as the people Hitler dealt with and to whom he owed his success."[lxxxii]

When Andy Ngo was almost beaten to death by an antifa mob, the journalistic profession in America showed no outraged. What could be more contemptible? But now the most

contemptible people are socialists of a different stripe, and nationalists who wink in the direction of Moscow, or lead trade delegations to Beijing.

And this must be added to the diagnosis: that the normal part of society has been traumatized by the abnormal – by neurotics and other maladjusted types – who have been given *carte blanche* in the public sphere. It is akin to the tenderization formula of some cannibal tribesmen. Though it sounds impossible, the situation is exactly this. We are being metabolized by crazy persons (who increasingly dominate society and are elevated by a growing number of crazies from below). At the same time our lands, our persons, and our capital goods are simultaneously being placed on a menu by crazy foreign leaders (though hardly anyone is noticing). Those placed on this menu may feel the sensation of being metabolized in the not-too-distant-future. To their horror they will realize that something is devouring them. Down the gullet we go. Here is the grand digestive direction toward which liberalism inclines and conservatism acquiesces; a fixed direction which must eventually take us, in the end, out the back end of the Great Cannibal *as excrement*.

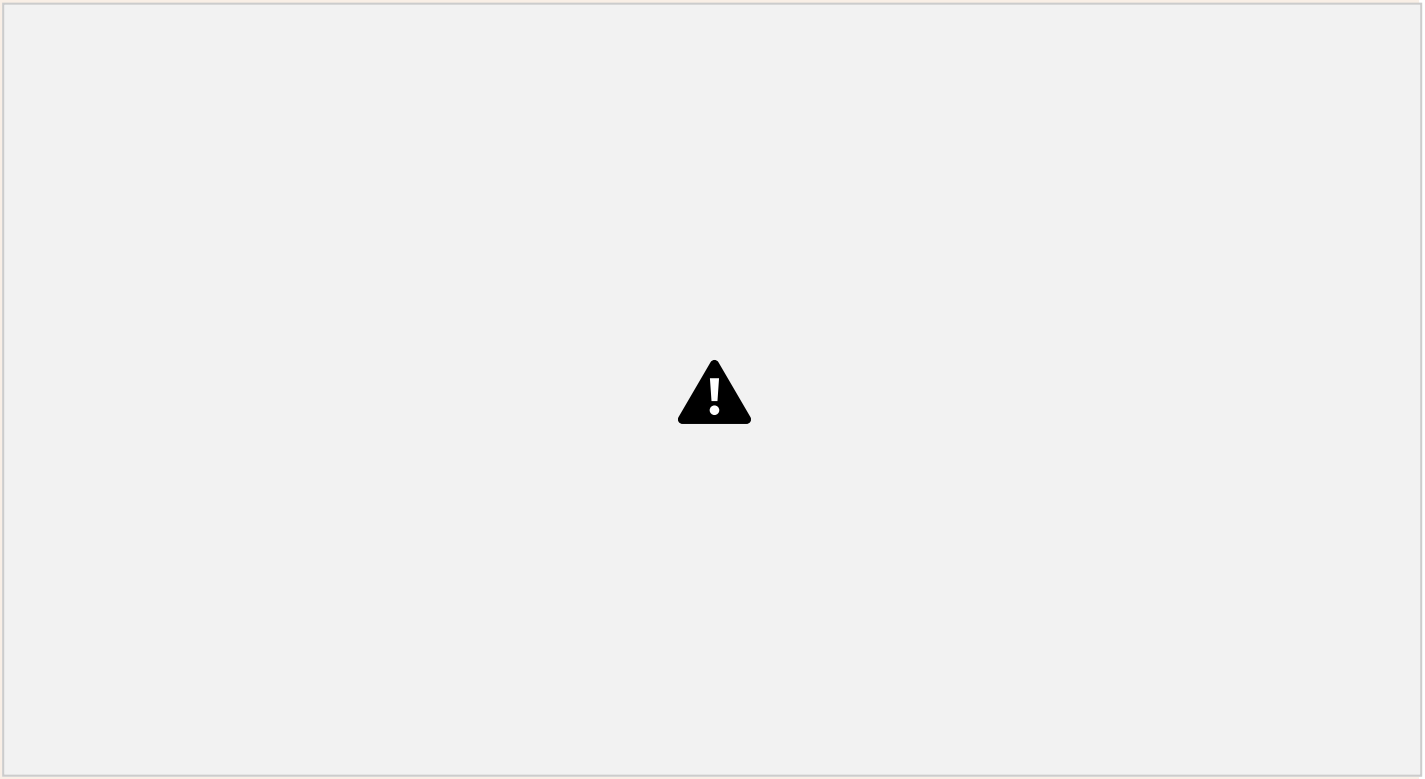
This contemptible state, toward which we progress, is not one of sustained or sustainable order; but rather, of bad odor. If we do not do something, we will stink. That this process has been allowed to develop by the leading representatives of society, who have either championed our cannibalization or acquiesced in it, is now indisputable. Why have they allowed it? Because our representatives in Congress have no respect for the structure of reality. And now the situation worsens, as the acquiescent conservatives have given way to MAGA.

As a snake's venom helps to predigest a serpent-stung rabbit, paralyzing and enervating the victim, MAGA serves a similar function. Its special effects include collective hallucinations, paranoid ideation, and dazzled incomprehension. One imagines chemtrails and Learned Elders of Zion, extraterrestrial reptilians and nefarious capitalist plotters. In this way we are blinded to real predators. We see Trump saying it is all glorious. We see a smiling Putin, or a smiling Xi Jinping. The predator watches through nocturnally adjusted vertical slit-eyes, slithering ever nearer, ready to devour us once we are completely helpless.

Perhaps, as the socialists say, it is all about serving man. And how best is man served? "With fava beans and a nice Chiante."[lxxxiii] For the hungry brain-eating minion of the Zombie Apocalypse, however, there is no need for culinary suggestions. America's zombies prefer a raw food diet. They went for Andy Ngo's brains, hemorrhaging and tenderized on the street. Many others have been metabolized metaphorically, career-wise, through the brainwashing of high schools and universities – through peer group pressure, popular books, career ambition, movies, music. Think how a human tasty treat becomes a

pressure-cooked human bean. Heidegger missed all this in his magnum opus, *Zeit und Sein*, which should have been titled *Zeit und Bohne*.

Take a sip of hemlock, my friends. In questioning the disordered structures of today we have transgressed and stand condemned. As Nietzsche once wrote in Zarathustra's Prologue, "A little poison now and then; that produces pleasant dreams. And a lot of poison at last, for a pleasant death."



Discussions and Podcasts

https://open.spotify.com/episode/5X72apIp2Dxh33K15ydp2h?si=50fddf3c6f2043cb

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Links and Notes

[i] Aesop, trans. S.A. Handford, *Fables of Aesop* (New York: Penguin Books, 1984), p. 96.

[ii] Gustave Le Bon, *Gustave Le Bon: The Man and His Works* (Indianapolis: LibertyPress, 1979), p. 134.

[iii] Democratic propaganda, having largely prevailed over the modern mind, accepts the idea that the Peloponnesian wars were fought between Delian League democrats and Peloponnesian League oligarchs, where "oligarch" has come down to us as a pejorative term. Modern readers might be appalled to learn that Athenians preferred selecting leaders by drawing lots as the only truly democratic way to ensure that every citizen had an equal chance to rule and be ruled. Imagine, if you will, selecting American officeholders at random from a telephone directory. Furthermore, Sparta was no more "oligarchic" in practice than today's so-called democracies. The Spartan lawgiver, Lycurgus, gave Sparta a "mixed constitution" where democracy, aristocracy, and monarchy existed together under a system of checks and balances. The democratic element in the Spartan political system bears a striking resemblance to ours today – only it was more democratic *in some respects*. Americans vote to elect national representatives every two years. The Spartan popular assembly (called the Apella or *Ekklesia*) elected five Ephors *every year*. In America Congress settles disputed presidential elections. In Sparta, the Apella settled disputes over monarchical succession. In America, Congress votes to accept or reject laws. In Sparta, the Apella accepted or rejected laws proposed by the Ephors. In America, Congress has the power to declare war and (the Senate) to ratify treaties. In Sparta, the Apella made final decisions regarding declarations of war and the ratification of treaties. Furthermore, the age qualification for an Ephor was the same as the age qualification to be a United States Senator.

[iv] Of special interest, Straussian philosophers Allan Bloom and Harry Jaffa fiercely rejected the thesis of Stone's book as an attack on the foundational bedrock of Western philosophical excellence in favor of a romanticized view of mob-ruled Athens. See "Stone v. Socrates," by David Gress, *The New Criterion*, June 1988, https://newcriterion.com/article/stone-v-socrates/.

[v] Gustave Le Bon, *Gustave Le Bon: The Man and His Works* (Indianapolis: LibertyPress, 1979), p. 112.

[vi] Julianne M. Romanello, "Eric Voegelin's Plato," Voegelin View, 29 January 2018, https://voegelinview.com/eric-voegelins-plato/. Romanello offers a particularly important insight regarding Voegelin's approach to political science and history, where she wrote, "Voegelin began his historical and comparative studies with a hypothesis about the relation between historical events and ideas or theory: social and political events and ideas about the meaning and purpose of existence affect each other mutually. Voegelin's hypothesis aimed at clarifying the relations between man's spiritual orientation … and his concrete experiences of social and political reality. What Voegelin discovered was a general pattern concerning philosophic discoveries: namely, the most significant philosophic insights arise from crises in social and political life. These crises are usually characterized by the

degeneration of one socially-dominant way of understanding man's place in the world – the effect of which is social and moral chaos."

[vii] Plato, *The Apology of Socrates* as translated Benjamin Jowett, Harvard Classics, Vol. 2 (New York: P.F. Collier & Son Company, 1909).

[viii] Xenophon, *Conversations of Socrates* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1990), p/. 48.

[ix] Eric Voegelin, *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, Vol. 18 (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2000), p. 53.

[x] Ibid, p. 57.

[xi] *Ibid*, pp. 58-59.

[xii] Paul Hazard, *The Crisis of the European Mind* (New York: New York Review Books, 2013), p. 435.

[xiii] *Ibid*, pp. 440-441.

[xiv] Richard Weaver, *Ideas Have Consequences*, p. 1.

[xv] Later published as *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*.

[xvi] http://personality-politics.org/china

[xvii] Friedrich Nietzsche trans. Walter Kaufmann, *The Gay Science*, #125.

[xviii] Friedrich Nietzsche trans. Walter Kaufmann, *The Will to Power*, Preface and 1:1-1:2.

[xix] The *New Testament* points to the murder of God in antiquity. Modern man apparently wants to commit the same crime. The more things change, the more they stay the same.

[xx] As shown in the book, *Ibsen and Hitler: The Playwright, the Plagiarist and the Plot for the Third Reich*, by Steven F. Sage, many of Hitler's speeches and parts of *Mein Kampf* were plagiarized from Henrik Ibsen's works.

[xxi] *Kansas*, "Dust in the Wind."

[xxii] Richard Weikart has argued that Hitler was a "scientific pantheist" whose rhetoric tended to a very fuzzy panentheism (i.e., the belief that the divine pervades and interpenetrates every part of the universe, while also extending beyond time and space). Hitler's strident Darwinist assumptions, however, strictly rule out the existence of a Christian God, or personal deity (as conceived by Judaism or Christianity). While Hitler maintained a public façade of supporting what he called "Positive Christianity," which stripped Jesus of his Jewish identity, the German dictator's private monologues (i.e., see *Hitler's Table Talk*) revealed a deep contempt for Christianity. Although Nietzsche was not antisemitic, Hitler took certain notions of Nietzsche about "blond beasts" and "morality as a special instance of immorality," creating an antisemitic context for these ideas.

[xxiii] https://jewishvirtuallibrary.org/adolf-hitler-on-cruelty-1942

[xxiv] https://x.com/PaideumaTV/status/2024373894824509822

[xxv] https://www.davidpublisher.com/Public/uploads/Contribute/643cc25d5b526.pdf

[xxvi] *Ibid*, p. 119, as cited from original source.

[xxvii] Nick Bryant, *The Franklin Scandal*, p. 473.

[xxviii] *Ibid*, pp. 473-74.

[xxix] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Finders_(movement)

[xxx] *Ibid*, p. 475.

[xxxi] *Ibid*, p. 478.

[xxxii] *Ibid.*

[xxxiii] https://www.jpands.org/hacienda/douglass.html

[xxxiv] From unpublished manuscript of Joe Douglass, based on Sejna's testimony.

[xxxv] Jules Michelet, trans. A.R. Allinson, *Satanism and Witchcraft* (Sacuas, New Jersey: Citadel Press), p. 303.

[xxxvi] https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/nov/17/jeffrey-epstein-emails-elites#:~:t

ext=Epstein%20also%20wrote%20multiple%20emails,is%20for%20the%20little%20people.

[xxxvii] Eric Voegelin, Science, Politics, and Gnosticism (Washington, DC: Regnery, 1997), pp. 3-4.

[xxxviii] *Ibid*, p. 3.

[xxxix] https://www.youtube.com/shorts/qTBICu49-oU

[xl] Patrick Harpur, *Daimonic Reality*, p. 15.

[xli] https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-46061646

[xlii] Anthony Scaramucci on Trump – What every leader is missing about Trump, 3 May 2026. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qf3w5Ff8p8k&t=2s – Scaramucci's book is titled, *All the Wrong Moves: How Three Catastrophic Decisions Led to the Rise of Trump*.

[xliii] See the memoirs of John Bolton, former Attorney General William Barr, and H.R. McMaster. Though they downplay Trump's narcissism, it is clearly described.

[xliv] Jacques Ellul trans. Konrad Kellen, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes* (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), p. 219.

[xlv] *Ibid*, p. 61.

[xlvi] *Ibid*.

[xlvii] *Ibid*, p. 62.

[xlviii] Marcus Aurelius trans. Maxwell Staniforth, *Meditations*, Book 4, Verse 28.

[xlix] Marcus Aurelius trans. Maxwell Staniforth, *Meditations*, Book 3, Verse 7.

[l] *Ibid*, Book 5, verse 19.

[li] *Ibid*, Book 6, verse 21.

[lii] Carlyle, Loc 245.

[liii] Carlyle, Loc 305.

[liv] Carlyle, Loc. 320.

[lv] Carlyle, Loc. 327.

[lvi] Carlyle, Loc 342.

[lvii] Carlyle, Loc 349

[lviii] Voegelin, *Autobiographical Reflections*, p. 93.

[lix] Richard M. Weaver, *Ideas Have Consequences*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 19.

[lx] See Nietzsche's *The Case of Wagner* where he says, "Wagner is not a composer. Wagner is an actor."

[lxi] Weaver, p. 113.

[lxii] *Ibid.*

[lxiii] *Ibid,* p. 114.

[lxiv] https://mosier.substack.com/

[lxv] Richard Weaver, pp. 57-58.

[lxvi] Richard M. Weaver, p. 23.

[lxvii] *Ibid*.

[lxviii] As predicted by Oswald Spengler in *The Decline of the West*.

[lxix] *Ibid.*

[lxx] Carlyle, *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, (Kindle), Loc 259.

[lxxi] National Socialist theorists liked to quote from Carlyle, mistaking his study of "Heroes and Hero Worship" as an argument supportive of Hitler's "Fuehrer Principle."

There is also a tendency in some to mistake Carlyle's heroes for "strong men," or as glorifying the concentration of power in the hands of one person. To be fair, dictatorship is not what Carlyle advocates. He has a concept of Providential history where sages and military heroes fulfill the mandates of a divinized Nature. Carlyle's heroes are never vindicated in terms of "might makes right." They were vindicated by Providence insofar as these men possessed truth and eschewed self-deception. This is best seen in his criticism of Napoleon who, he says, started out as a hero with divine sanction and ended as a deluded despot cast into exile for losing his way. One of the strategies Carlyle uses in his work, *Past and Present*, is to sketch out a metaphorical interaction between past and present sages and military leaders. It is as if, in history, there is a conversation as well as a deep connection between major personalities and episodes; that is, through meanings that are not strictly linear in terms of history's timeline. Eric Voegelin had a similar conception, which completely strips down the whole idea of "might makes right" in a way that is unmistakable. Characterizing Carlyle as a precursor to National Socialism would be like Characterizing George Washington as a precursor to Vladimir Putin. In fact, Carlyle's concept is without reference to time or precursors. The impact of Providence is Eternal. It flowers repeatedly, beautifully; and like the process of blossoming, eternally recurs.

[lxxii] Carlyle, *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, (Kindle), Loc 267.

[lxxiii] Carlyle, Loc 274.

[lxxiv] Carlyle, Loc 274-281.

[lxxv] The Roman office of censor, in the ancient Roman Republic, was responsible for maintaining the census, supervising public morality, and overseeing certain aspects of the government's finances. Established in 443 BC, the censor was elected by the *Comitia Centuriata* and held a term of 18 months to 5 years. Censors had absolute power in their sphere, meaning no other magistrate could oppose their decisions, and only another censor could cancel them. Their role in public morality is the origin of the modern meaning of the words censor and censorship.

[lxxvi] Carlyle, Loc 281.

[lxxvii] *Ibid.*

[lxxviii] See Robert Michels, *Political Parties* (Kindle).

[lxxix] A brief list of historical examples from the Julio-Claudian dynasty may be useful: Brutus and Cassius for Caesar, Tiberius for Augustus, Sejanus for Tiberius, Incitatus for Caligula (lol), Valeria Messalina for Claudius, the Praetorian Guard for Nero, etc.

[lxxx] Consider the true whereabouts of George Marshall on the morning of December 7, 1941. When concerns about a surprise attack emerged in the morning hours of that day, Marshall could not be found until it was too late to effectively warn Admiral Kimmel and General Short in Hawaii. Marshall testified that he was horseback riding that morning. Later, in December 1945, he changed his testimony to say that he was with his wife. According to a journalist who was traveling with incoming Soviet Ambassador Litvinov, Marshall was with the Soviet Ambassador on the morning of December 7th. It is curious that he did not want this fact to see the light of day.

[lxxxi] Eric Voegelin, *Hitler and the Germans*, p. 83.

[lxxxii] *Ibid*, p. 82.

[lxxxiii] Hannibal Lecter, as quoted from *The Silence of the Lambs*.